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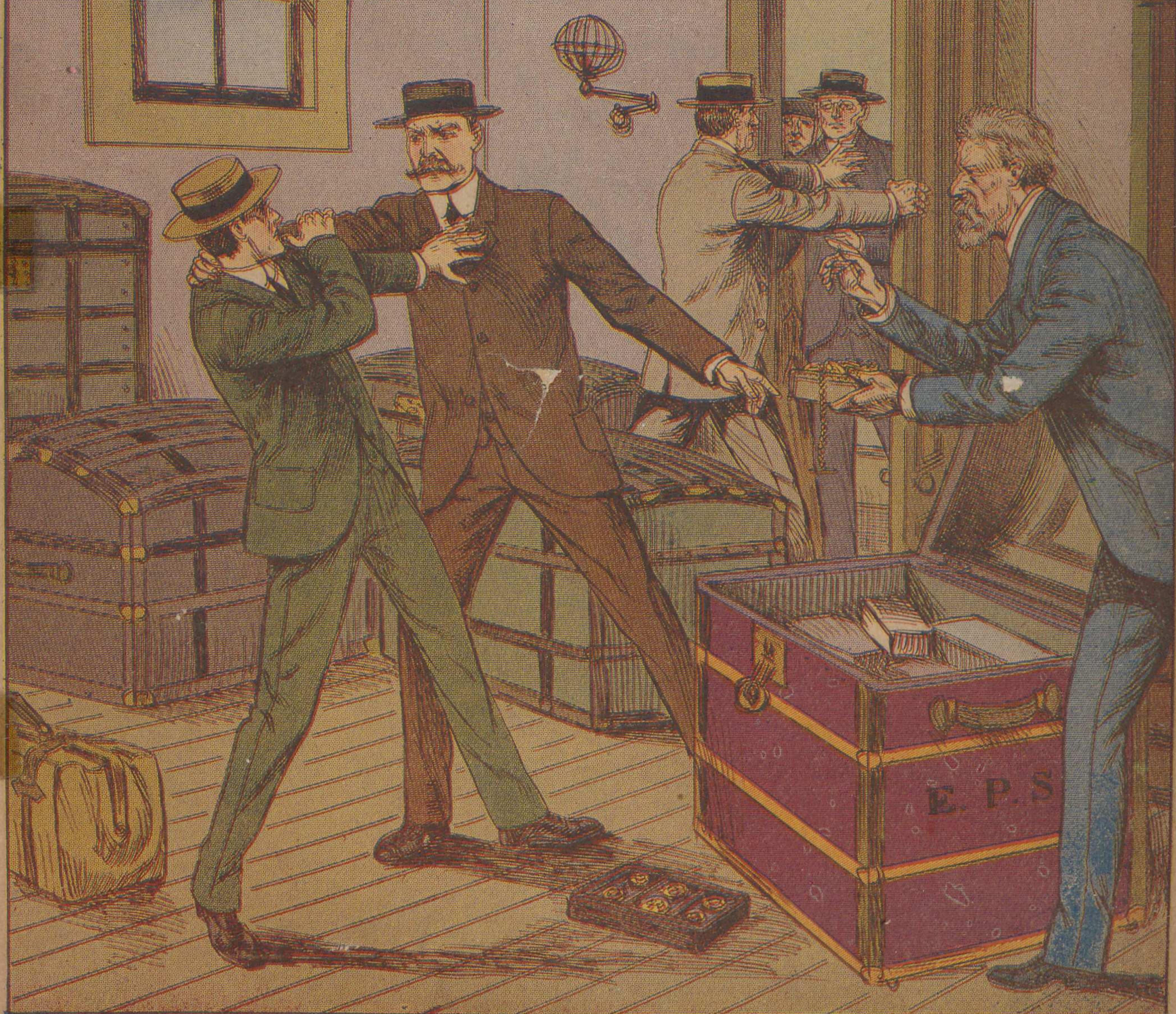
5 Cents.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

FULL OF BUSINESS
OR THE YOUNG TRAVELER FOR THE FIRM
AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



Harry was amazed. The missing jewelry was in his trunk. Judson grabbed him. "You young thief!" he bellowed. "I've caught you with the goods. It's jail for yours now!"
The searcher held up some more of the missing property.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

JNA

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No. 411.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 15, 1913.

Price 5 Cents.

FULL OF BUSINESS

—OR—

THE YOUNG TRAVELER FOR THE FIRM

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

ON THE WRONG TACK.

"I have certainly missed my way, for I ought to have reached the village before this. Now it's getting dark and I don't know where I am," said Harry Green, reining in his horse and looking over the country landscape on either side of the long, dusty road.

Harry was a young commercial traveler out on his first trip. He was employed by the firm of Hatch & Co., of Chicago, jobbers of cheap jewelry, watches, stylographic pens, and a miscellaneous collection of nicknames, which the firm picked up at rock bottom figures at auction sales and sold at a handsome profit through traveling salesmen.

The young drummer was supposed to sell only by sample and transmit his orders to the firm to be filled, and to carry out this impression he carried a regular sample case around with him; but as a matter of fact he also carried a trunk full of the goods which he delivered himself, taking the cash for the same.

These goods he had bought and paid for before starting out, but any unsold articles at the end of his trip he had the privilege of returning and getting his money back for the same.

The reason he carried a trunkful of duplicates was because he visited chiefly villages and small towns, the storekeepers of which, in many cases, were people who did not require to purchase a bill of goods large enough to make it worth while transmitting their order to Chicago, so he supplied them on the spot for cash.

As he sold only to dealers at wholesale figures, he could not be considered in any sense a peddler, and was not liable to arrest for selling goods without a local license.

Harry made his headquarters at a town on the railroad, stopping at a second-rate hotel, and when he had done the town thoroughly he would hire a horse, take his sample, and another case full of duplicates, and start out for a tour of the nearby villages, leaving his trunk at the hotel, in the storage-room.

When he got back to the town he would board the first local going in the direction he was bound and go on to his next stand.

His side trips sometimes extended over a week and took him quite a distance from town, and he was often compelled to put up for the night, and more often for his meals, at a farmhouse on his route.

He seldom had to put out any cash in such cases, as he always managed to sell a watch of the dollar variety, or some cheap jewelry of a similar caliber, or some nickknacks, which resulted in an addition to his cash on top of the price for a bed or his meal, or both.

Harry rather liked the business, for he got a great deal of fresh air, and horseback riding was healthy exercise.

Constant change of scene, and meeting with a variety of little incidents that interested him, prevented him from tiring of his new occupation, which he regarded as the stepping stone to a regular traveler's position.

On the morning previous to the afternoon we introduce him to the attention of the reader, he left the town of Springdale for the village of Edgewater.

After doing business there he pushed on to another village a few miles away, where he put in the night at the inn.

Here he learned of a large village ten miles away, and he went on there first thing in the morning.

He did very well there, and was about to return to Springdale when the hotel man, where he got his dinner, told him that if he would go on to Woodland, eight miles away, he ought to do business there in his particular line.

After considering the matter, Harry got the bearings of the village, had the road pointed out, and started.

He expected to get there by four o'clock, but as he met two farmers who prevailed on him to stop at their farms and sell them some of his stock, which he had no right to do according to local regulations, he lost about two hours, but made nearly \$5 profit.

He should have reached Woodland around six, but it was now close on to seven, twilight was coming on, and the village was nowhere in sight.

He had, without knowing it, taken the wrong turning at the cross-roads, and was getting further away from his destination ever moment.

The road ran up hill from the point where he stopped to survey his surroundings, and he decided to push on to the highest point, thinking that from that elevated place he might see the village in the distance.

When he reached the top of the hill, only outlying farms met his sight.

The village was nowhere in sight.

When his gaze rested on the foot of the hill, where the road swung around to the left, he spied what he took to be a road-house embowered among the trees.

"I'll go on there and get my bearings. If I'm too far out of the way I'll stay there for the night, as I don't care to travel around in the dark," he said.

The house was only a third of a mile away, so he did not hurry his animal, and he made the distance at a walk.

Dusk gathered rapidly, and it was almost dark by the time he reached the house.

The gloom was intensified by the overcast sky which had hidden the sun all the afternoon.

Harry found the building was not a road-house, but a large

dwelling surrounded by a weather-stained picket fence, which took in a barn and one or two smaller outbuildings.

All the windows in sight were dark and, as far as appearances went, he could not tell whether the house was inhabited or not, but he judged it must be, and that people were at supper in a back room on the ground floor.

He opened the gate, walked his horse in, and tied him to a large apple tree on one side of the front yard.

Then he walked around to the rear.

He found lights here, as he expected, and he knocked on the back door.

An elderly woman opened the door and looked at him inquisitively.

"How do you do, ma'am," said Hal, politely. "Can you tell me how far I am from the village of Woodland?"

"Woodland!" she exclaimed. "That's all of ten miles from here."

"Ten miles!" ejaculated the boy. "I thought it was close by. I must have come a long distance out of the way. The landlord of the hotel at Fairview told me it was only eight miles from there. I left Fairview at two o'clock, and took the road he pointed out, and now it's after seven and I'm two miles further from Woodland, apparently, than when I started."

"You must have taken the wrong road at the fork. Had you taken the right one you would only have had a mile to go. You have come nine miles out of your way."

"That's kind of awkward for me. I'm a stranger in this part of the country, and if I try to get to Woodland in the dark I'm likely to make a worse job of it than I have already done. It looks as if it might rain soon, too. Could you accommodate me here for the night. I will pay whatever you think is right."

"No," she said, "we couldn't accommodate you. The house is full."

Harry looked at the darkness all around him, which by this time had blotted out the landscape on all sides, and even rendered the barn at the back of the yard indistinguishable.

He saw two lights wide apart in the distance, and judged they came from the farm-houses he had seen from the top of the hill.

The prospect of being obliged to retrace his way to the fork was by no means pleasant.

Even under the most favorable conditions he could hardly hope to reach Woodland much before ten o'clock, and he would have to go supperless to bed.

"Well, if you can't furnish me with a bed, I suppose you can't," he said, in a disappointed tone. "Perhaps you could provide me with supper. I see no chance of getting anything to eat to-night unless you do. I will pay you for it."

The woman hesitated.

Then she said she would see.

She closed the door, leaving him standing outside, and Harry waited for her to return, trusting he would not be sent away hungry.

Presently a man appeared out of the darkness of the yard.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, in a sharp tone, "what you doing around here? Who are you?"

"I am a commercial traveler on my way to Woodland, but being ignorant of the proper way there, I came quite a distance out of my way. I have just been talking to the woman of the house. As it's very dark and the sky suggests rain, I asked her if I could remain all night, offering to pay for the accommodation. She said it was impossible, as the house was full. From that I judge that the family occupies all the rooms. She has retired to find out if I will be permitted to remain to supper."

"Supper! I fancy you'll get no supper here unless I say so."

"Are you the master of the house?"

"No; but what I say goes."

"Well, you see the fix I'm in. Unless you oblige me with supper I'm not likely to get anything to eat before morning. I'll pay you for it."

"What will you pay?"

"I think fifty cents would be a fair price."

"And what will you pay for a bed if I find you one?"

"Fifty cents more."

"And you'll want breakfast. Are you willing to pay another half a dollar for that?"

"Yes," replied the young commercial traveler, who felt that though the price was high, he would rather stand it than search for Woodland in the dark.

"Hand over the money and you can stay."

Hal shoved his hand in his pocket.

"Perhaps you'd like to take it out in a watch," he said.

"A watch!" cried the man. "Ain't you got any money?"

"Oh, yes, but as I'm selling a fine grade of a gun metal watch for \$1.50—warranted first-class time-keeper, guaranteed for at least one year, perfect in all respects, fully as good as a \$50 gold repeater for your service, your money back inside of thirty days if the watch fails to come up to what I represent it—I thought maybe I could make a trade."

The watch in question was what Hal was selling at \$1 wholesale, and as it cost him about 70 cents, he naturally preferred making a trade for one than coming down with \$1.50 in cash.

"I'll look at it," said the man.

"What'll you charge for feeding my horse and keeping him in your barn overnight?"

"You're riding a horse, are you. I'll charge you another fifty cents."

"All right," said Hal. "He's tied to a tree in the front yard."

They went and got the horse and took him to the stable.

The man lighted a lantern and helped take his saddle and the two cases off.

He eyed the latter curiously.

"You're selling watches around the country?" he said.

"I'm taking orders for cheap jewelry, watches and other things. Sometimes I sell a watch, or a piece of jewelry, or something else, as a special favor, at wholesale price."

"You carry your stock in those cases, I suppose?"

"Yes. They're my sample cases that I use to show my goods and take orders with. The goods selected are afterwards shipped to the customer from my firm in Chicago."

"I see," said the man, lifting the case containing Hal's supply of duplicates, and figuring on its weight. "You can leave the cases here. They'll be safe."

"I'll take my sample case so as to show you the watch I mentioned."

"It'll do in the morning," said the man, blowing out the light.

The cases were placed on a low shelf used for carpenter work, for there was a string of tools at the back of it, and they left the barn, the man locking the door.

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGE PAIR.

Harry entered the house with the man.

The room they walked into was the kitchen, and the woman was busy at the stove.

A table was spread for supper there, and the young traveler noticed there were but two plates.

Hal judged that the man and the woman were the servants of the place, and that the family had their meals in the dining-room.

As the house was a large one, and, according to the woman, was fully occupied, it was reasonable to suppose that the family was of some size.

"Lay another plate, Jane," said the man; "this young man sups with us. He also stays all night and will take breakfast, so you had better get the red room ready for him later."

The disturbed look which came over the woman's face when the man said the visitor would eat with them increased to one of alarm when he said that the boy was to remain all night.

"The red room!" she repeated, faintly.

"I said the red room," said the man, harshly.

The woman made no reply, but turned to the stove, and her movements appeared nervous and unsteady.

As the young traveler was a close observer of all that transpired around him, he wondered at her agitated manner.

He guessed the woman was the man's wife, and that she was afraid of him.

He did not greatly wonder at that after the aggressive way he addressed her.

The man spoke and acted as though he was the boss of the house.

This seemed singular if he was an employee about the place, as he looked to be.

If the red room in question was a spare one, why had the woman told him that he could not be accommodated, alleging that the house was full?

She might at least have laid his request before the master of the house before turning him down.

When he made his request for something to eat, and she left him with the words that she would see about it, he supposed she went to the proper person to consult on the subject.

Probably she had come back with an answer, which her present actions would indicate was in the negative, while he was at the barn with the man.

If the master or the mistress had said no, it would account for the woman's nervousness when the man took upon himself to accommodate the visitor, and even order the red room to be prepared for him.

For a servant to act in presumed defiance of higher authority looked odd to the boy.

However, he was too hungry to argue the matter.

If the man got into trouble over it, why, that was his lookout.

In any case he did not see why the master or the mistress should refuse their hospitality to one placed in the situation he was.

It wasn't like country people to do so.

Harry took a seat out of the way to wait till he was called to the table.

The man filled a tin basin with water out of a bucket near the sink and proceeded to wash himself.

He combed and brushed his rough hair with the aid of a small mirror attached to the wall near the window looking out on the back yard.

"Well, isn't supper nearly ready?" he growled as he turned around.

"Yes," said the woman in a low tone.

"Dish it up, then, and lay that other plate as I told you to," he said.

The speaker walked about the room without noticing the young traveler, picked up a copy of a village newspaper, the name of which Harry saw was the Eastchester News, and, drawing a chair to the table on which the lamp stood, began to look it over.

The woman placed a third plate with knife and fork at the side of the table, and then brought the cooked food on dishes.

She poured out three cups of coffee, and announced that supper was ready.

"Sit up, young man," said the man, throwing down the paper. "We haven't a big spread, but the old woman didn't expect a visitor."

Harry drew up his chair and was served to a portion of bacon and eggs, and told to help himself to the fried potatoes and the bread and butter.

"Make yourself at home," said the man. "What did you say your name was?"

"Harry Green."

"Mine is Smith. This is my wife."

Harry bowed to the woman, but as she was looking down at her plate, his politeness was lost on her.

"The family will have no objection to my remaining here overnight, I hope?" ventured Hal, wishing to make sure on that point.

"Don't you worry about that. I've given you a room and you're going to pay me for it, also for your supper and breakfast, and taking care of your horse. As long as you can pay there won't be no trouble about you staying."

"I saw you reading the Eastchester News. Is there a village by the name of Eastchester near here—I mean nearer than Woodland?"

"Yes; about six miles over yonder," said the man, jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

"Is it as large as Woodland?" asked Harry, thinking he might do some business there in the morning.

"No; it's only a small place."

"It seems to be large enough to support a newspaper."

"It ain't much of a paper," said Smith, eating away.

"I suppose it wouldn't be worth my while going there?"

"Not unless you wanted to peddle your stuff among the villagers."

"I am not a peddler," said the boy.

"Just so. You travel around and take orders from stores. You wouldn't find any stores in your line in Eastchester. The general store there don't deal in watches and jewelry. If any one wants such things they go to Woodland, or to Derby, in the other direction."

Harry kept his ears cocked for sounds indicating the presence of the family in the front of the house, but not a sound reached him from that direction.

Still supposing that a large family occupied the house, he looked to see one or more members of it come into the kitchen, but none came.

Several times he was on the point of referring to the family, but he didn't.

When supper was over the man asked him if he wanted to go to bed soon.

Harry looked at the cheap watch he carried and saw it was half-past eight.

"I'm not in a hurry," he said.

"You can look over the paper," said Smith, handing him the News. "Go and get the red room ready," he added to his wife.

The woman looked at her husband and hesitated.

He took a step toward her in a menacing way, and that started her.

"My wife is bothered with a touch of the nerves," said Smith when the woman disappeared through a door which opened on to a passage. "I think a change in the weather affects her."

Harry made no reply, and the man went to a shelf, got down a cigar box containing a pipe and loose tobacco, filled the pipe and began to smoke, standing at the window and looking out into the darkness.

The boy thought he was a rather unsociable sort of fellow, and did not bother saying anything to him.

In the course of fifteen minutes the woman returned and began clearing off the table.

"Is the room ready?" asked her husband, going to her.

"Yes," she answered, laconically.

"What did you do with the lamp?"

"I left it burning in the entry," she replied.

"If you want to retire I'll show you the way," said Smith to the visitor.

Harry had no objection, for he felt in the way in the kitchen, so he got up and said he was ready to turn in.

"Come along, then," said the man.

The lamp stood on the back stairs.

Smith picked it up and mounted the flight.

Harry followed him.

Not a sound reached his ears but the man's footfall and his own.

The house was certainly uncommonly quiet for one fully occupied as the woman had told him it was.

A long corridor, with doors on either side, took them to the end of the second story.

Here Smith opened a door and introduced the young traveler into the red room.

It was fully entitled to its name, for the walls were papered in a deep red color, and the furniture was upholstered to match.

The bureau even was set off by red tides.

The carpet was also of a pronounced red pattern.

The effect was not pleasant on the nerves and eye.

The lamplight cast weird shadows over the red walls and about the corners which the light was not strong enough to illuminate.

"I don't wonder you call this the red room," said Harry. "I never saw so much red in one combination before. I can't say that I admire the taste of the person responsible for the decoration."

"Don't you like it?"

"No."

"This is the best room in the house."

"The best room! Why isn't it occupied by the master and mistress, then?"

"The doctor and his family are away in Europe."

"Oh, they are? And who lives in this house besides you and your wife?"

"Nobody."

"But your wife told me the house was full."

"She didn't want you to stay here."

"Didn't she like my looks?"

"Your looks are all right, but you see this is the 13th of May."

"What has that date got to do with me staying here one night?"

"Because on the night of the 13th of May things happen in the house."

"What happens?"

"I'd rather not tell you. Nothing happens in this room, that's why I've put you here. If you hear sounds around the house later on, pay no attention to them. Probably you won't hear them if you go right to sleep and you're tired."

"Do you want me to understand that the house is haunted on the night of the 13th of May?"

"Well, that's what my wife says."

"What do you say about it?"

"I've heard strange sounds, but they don't bother me any."

"This is such a singular looking room that if any part of the house was haunted I should be inclined to fancy it would be this room."

"No, this room is all right. Me and the missus always use

it on this night. As I've given it to you, we'll have to sleep in the barn."

"You and your wife always use it on this night, you say? How long have you lived here?"

"Thirteen years."

"Have those strange sounds been heard every 13th of May since you've been here?"

"Yes."

"Where do the doctor and his family sleep on the 13th of May when they're home?"

"They always go away on the 12th and come back on the 14th."

"Hasn't the doctor ever investigated the phenomena?"

"Yes, but he never could find out what caused the noises."

"What kind of noises are they?"

"I couldn't tell you. They're always different."

"Always different?"

"It's the garret mostly that's haunted. The sounds come from there. Crying and odd sounds like that. But as they come from the other end of the house, you mightn't hear them anyway. At any rate, you needn't be scared. You won't be hurt."

Then Smith bade him good-night and left him to turn in.

Harry stood and looked after him.

Something like a soft click, as if the key was turned in the door, struck upon his ears.

The sound aroused the young traveler, and he walked to the door to lock it.

There was no key in the lock.

"I wonder if that man locked me in here?" he asked himself.

He laid his hand on the knob and turned it.

He found the door fast, evidently locked from the other side.

"Now, what does this all mean?" said Harry, not quite easy in his mind, not because of Smith's statement that the house was haunted on the 13th of May, but because the said Smith had clearly locked him in the red room, and the boy wondered why he had done so.

CHAPTER III.

THE GIRL.

"There's something crooked in the wind," thought Harry. "That woman acted mighty strange. She didn't want me to stop here for some reason. Her husband said it was because this is the 13th of May, and the house is haunted with noises on that night. I believe that was just a yarn he handed to me to cover up his wife's singular conduct, which he felt I must have noticed and wondered at. He wouldn't lock me in here if he didn't have some sinister purpose in view. I'll bet his object is to rob me of my two cases, thinking he will make a big haul. Doubtless I'm not the only victim he has sheltered for the night and cleaned out before morning. If his wife was a willing partner of his rascalities she would not have tried to shoo me away when I asked for shelter. Well, I wonder how I'm going to prevent that fellow from carrying out his scheme? I'm locked in, but perhaps I can reach the ground from the window, as I'm only on the second floor. Then if I could manage to open the door of the barn, and get my horse and cases out, I'd make tracks from here, and take my chances of finding my way to Woodland in the dark."

He went to the window, which he noticed was down a couple of inches at the top, and started to lift the bottom sash.

It wouldn't move.

He looked to see what was holding it, and found that a nail was driven in on either side.

Then he tried to pull down the upper sash, but that, too, was secured in some way.

With the door locked and the window immovable, Harry realized that he was a prisoner for keeps.

The particular fact that the window was fast had a disquieting effect on him in connection with the room, for he knew that, unless the woman had nailed it up during the time she was away from the kitchen, that it had not been prepared this way on his account.

There was a second door which Harry opened, and found it was a closet.

There was nothing in it but a shelf with a row of hooks underneath.

He opened all the bureau drawers and found them empty.

He turned down the bed clothes and found that the mattress was a soft one, presumably filled with feathers.

He sat on the side of it and considered the situation.

His watch told him that it was a quarter past nine.

If anything was going to happen with respect to himself, he guessed it would not occur for a while yet, as it was early.

He was resolved on one thing—he would not go to bed.

He turned the lamp down low, for he suspected that the man would come back and look through the keyhole.

"If I had a revolver I wouldn't feel quite so helpless," he murmured. "Yet why should I expect a hostile visit from that man? If he is after my property he knows it is in the barn. Still, I have money about me, and he probably figures on that, though I showed him none. A person could be murdered in this lonesome place and no one but the guilty person be the wiser of it. To say the truth, I don't like the looks of things at all. My unlucky star was in the ascendant when I missed the road to Woodland."

So time passed slowly away and ten o'clock came around.

Not a sound reached his ears from below.

He was not surprised at that, for he was in the wing farthest from the kitchen.

The rooms above, below and around him were untenanted.

Smith's story about the uncanny proceedings on the 13th of May had no effect on his mind, and, therefore, did not affect his nerves.

He did not believe the yarn.

Neither did he put much faith in ghosts and such spiritual manifestations.

"A live rascal, such as I believe this Smith to be, is more to be feared than any ghost," he thought. "Suppose there are such things as ghosts, how can they harm one when there is nothing tangible about them? A spook couldn't pass through a wall, as they are said to do quite often, if there was anything material in their make-up; and if there is nothing material about them, what can they do? If you laid hold of one you wouldn't feel anything, any more than you can feel a beam of moonlight or sunshine. I wonder why people are afraid of ghosts when there isn't anything to them?"

At that moment Harry heard a light sound at the back of the room.

He looked in that direction and saw something white against the somber red tint of the wall.

It looked like a human being or the ghost of one.

As the boy had already satisfied himself that the only entrance to the room was by way of the door, and the door was at the other end of the room, he may be pardoned for being a bit startled at the strange and silent appearance of the figure in white.

He had little time to consider the matter, for the figure advanced toward the center of the room, and as its outlines became clearer to his sight, he saw that the visitor was a girl clad in white.

Nor could it be the ghost of a girl, for there was nothing ethereal or impalpable in her composition.

It was not possible to look through her, which convinced him that he had real flesh and blood to deal with.

How she could have got into the room, apparently through the solid wall, was a puzzling problem, but that she had was self-evident, consequently it stood to reason there must be a secret door in the wall.

As secret doors in houses were rather out of date, it struck him that the door had been made for a purpose—probably a sinister one.

These thoughts flashed through his mind while the figure was advancing.

Who was this girl, and under what conditions was she an inmate of the house?

Was there a mystery connected with her?

What had brought her to the red room?

So far she gave no sign that she was aware of his presence there.

Harry remained as quiet as a mouse.

He could hardly hope to escape her observation, and he was afraid if he made a movement it would startle her, and she would scream out.

That was bound to reach as far as the kitchen and bring the man up to see what had caused it, if the scream itself didn't give him a clew.

The girl moved quickly, passed on the other side of the table and seemed intent on only one thing, and that was reaching the door.

She reached for the handle and turned it.

"Locked!" she exclaimed. "Oh, dear, will I never be able to escape from this house?"

She sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands.

Harry rose, stepped to the table and turned up the light.

The girl started up with a stifled scream and stared at the boy.

"Don't be frightened, miss. Are you a prisoner in this house?" said Harry.

"Who are you, and how came you here? I never saw you before," she said.

"My name is Harry Green. I'm a commercial traveler from Chicago. Overtaken by darkness on this road I applied here for supper and a bed. I found a man and a woman in charge of the premises. They gave me a meal, and the man brought me to this room to pass the night. He said there was no one living here but himself and his wife. Your presence here proves he did not tell the truth. Your actions show you are not a voluntary occupant of the place. Tell me who you are. If I can help you in any way I will do so."

"You can help me by unlocking the door. I have been kidnaped from my home in Chicago, and am being held here till my father pays a large sum of money for my return. If I can get out of the house I will be able to claim shelter at one of the farm-houses in this neighborhood until I have sent word to my father to come after me."

"I would gladly open the door if I could, but I cannot. The man who brought me up here locked me in, and as the windows cannot be opened, I am as much a prisoner as you are yourself."

"Why did he lock you in?"

"I suppose his intention is to rob me. I have two hand cases of samples in the barn, where my horse is, and I have money about me. It is quite evident to me that the man is a rascal, and the woman, who is his wife, must be tarred with the same brush."

"Oh, dear, what are we to do?"

"How did you enter this room? I have examined it close enough to assure myself that the only door, other than the one leading into the closet yonder, is that locked one."

"I accidentally discovered a secret panel in the room where I have been confined in the other wing of the house. It let me into a long and narrow passage, which I followed, hoping I would be able to find my way out of the house before my escape became known, for the woman brought me my supper as usual before dark, and I did not expect another visit from her till the morning. When I reached the end of the passage I hunted for the exit I felt must be there. I could not find it, and was about to give up in despair when, as if I had touched a spring, a panel in the wall, similar to the one in the room I left, opened and I found myself in this room, which seemed to be occupied. I rushed at once to this door, only to find it was locked."

"I sympathize with you in your disappointment. You don't want to leave the room any quicker than I do. Tell me your name and how it came about that you were kidnaped from your home, and by whom."

"My name is Elsie Carter. My father is a rich merchant of Chicago. We live on Prairie avenue. I was surprised on the street near my home at dusk a month ago by three men who stifled my cries with a shawl thrown over my head. I was lifted into an automobile and carried off. After I was brought here, which seems to be a considerable distance from Chicago, for we traveled all night at a high rate of speed without stopping except for brief intervals, I was told by one of the men that I would be released when satisfactory arrangements had been made with my father for the sum of \$50,000, and the money had been duly paid."

"Three men, you say, brought you here. Was one of them named Smith?"

"I do not know their names at all. I only see the woman. She brings me my meals and waits on me. She seems very sad, like a woman with a deep grief. I think she sympathizes with me, and would help me if she dared."

"That is the woman I met downstairs—the wife of Smith. She did not want me to enter the house. She did all she could to prevent me from stopping here. Had not her husband appeared and agreed to let me stay if I would pay him a sum agreed upon between us, I would not be here now. I suppose he is one of the three men who kidnaped you. The other two do not appear to be about at the present time."

"I suppose they are negotiating with my father."

"Quite likely. Well, now, we must try to escape from here somehow. Once out of this room, I'll bet that man couldn't prevent us from getting away."

"How can we get out of the room?"

"That's a problem. I haven't anything to force the door with. If you showed me the way to your room I suppose we should be no better off, for the door of that room is locked, too. How about the window? Is it fast like this one?"

"The lower sash is nailed, but the upper one can be moved up and down half way."

"Half way," said Harry, looking at the window and mentally calculating whether it would be possible for him to crawl out of that space.

It struck him as very doubtful.

"Where is the secret panel?" he asked.

The girl took him to the back wall, but there was no sign of such a thing.

"It is closed," she said.

"It is operated with a spring, you said. The only way to open it is to find the spring, I suppose. Let us hunt for it."

He got the lamp and turned it up.

He flashed the light all over the part of the wall indicated by Miss Carter, but they failed to discover the spring which released the panel from that side.

"How did you find the spring in your room?" asked Harry.

"The lamplight shone on a bright spot in the wall. It attracted my notice and I went over to see what it was. It looked like a circular disk of brass. I felt of it, pressing my finger upon it. It yielded and the panel opened, much to my astonishment."

"I don't see any brass disc on this wall. If one is here it has been painted red to agree with the color of the wall."

They finally had to give the matter up.

"You can't get back to your room, Miss Carter, but I guess you're not anxious to go back. If we are going to make our escape it must be from this room," said the young traveler.

At that moment they heard a sound at the door.

"Hist! There's some one at the door—the man Smith, probably. Hide behind the bureau," said Harry, blowing out the light as he whispered.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ESCAPE.

Harry had no chance to replace the lamp on the table, for he heard the key turning in the lock.

He crouched down where he was and waited developments.

The night was so black that not a gleam of light came in through the window, and therefore the room was as dark as pitch.

Harry heard the door open, but could not see the person who came softly in.

He reasoned that it must be Smith.

Presently there came an exclamation from the bed.

It sounded like a woman.

Harry grabbed Miss Carter by the arm.

"We must steal out softly," he said. "The door is open."

Before they could make a move, a match was scratched, and as the tiny flame flared up the two prisoners saw that the person in the room was the woman.

She held the match toward the bed and saw it was unoccupied, as her touch in the dark had indicated it was.

Harry knew that her next move would be to look around the room, and he could not hope to escape discovery.

Accordingly, he decided to take the bull by the horns.

The door stood open and he could easily master the woman in a struggle.

He rose and stepped forward as she turned and faced him.

"Well, Mrs. Smith, what brings you to my room?"

She started and dropped the match.

This was the boy's chance, as he figured, and he glided forward and grabbed her.

"Now, what is the meaning of all this business? Why did your husband lock me in here? If you scream I'll choke you. Answer my question."

"Don't ask me—please don't," she cried, all in a tremble. "I came to release you and get you away from this house; but for my sake—I am a most unhappy woman—you will be silent as to what has happened. If you send the police to arrest us—my husband and I—it will be the last straw upon my back—it will kill me. Be satisfied then to get away with your horse and property. Take the road back to the fork, turn to your left and you will reach Woodland."

"Well, ma'am, I'm inclined to believe that you mean well. You did not want me to stay here to-night, and you did what you could to prevent me doing so."

"Yes, yes. My husband is leading a bad life and is breaking my heart."

"Why don't you leave him, then?"

"I can't: oh, I can't. He is the cross of my life, and I will not desert him, come what may. You will be silent, won't you? I am saving you from trouble, at a great risk to my-

self. The only thing I ask of you is not to breathe a word of what has happened to you here."

"All right, ma'am, I'll comply with your wishes for the aid you are giving me."

"May heaven bless you. If you could guess what I have passed through, and am passing through, you would pity me."

"I do pity you as the wife of such a man. Where is he now?"

"He went to the village of Eastchester a little while ago."

"Six miles from here."

"No. It is less than a mile. He did not tell you the truth about the distance lest you should decide to go on there after supper. He wanted to make the two dollars you had promised him."

"And to rob me besides. Is it not so?"

The woman was silent, but Harry felt her shiver at his words, and he knew he had voiced the truth.

"Well, never mind what he intended to do. So long as I get away before he returns I'll let the matter go. How shall I get my horse and my sample cases?"

"I have the key of the barn in my hand. Come with me and we will go there."

"All right, ma'am. You go ahead and I will follow you in a moment."

"Why do you wish to delay?"

"Well, suspecting that your husband intended to rob me when I got to sleep, I hid my money in the room. You go on while I get it. Await me at the head of the stairs. I know they are at the end of the passage."

"I will do so," she said, submissively.

He led her to the door and saw her out.

He had not hidden his money in the room.

His statement was a ruse to get her out of the way so that he could have a word or two with Miss Carter and arrange for the young lady's escape.

As soon as the woman started down the passage, Harry rushed back.

He found the girl trembling behind the bureau.

"Now, Miss Carter," he said, "the woman is going to take me to the barn so I can get my horse and property. Follow us cautiously, and as soon as we are outside, watch us to the barn. Then get out yourself and run to the front gate. Open it and walk up the road a little way to your left. Then wait for me. Your escape will then be certain, and will probably not be discovered till morning. Long before that we will be on the road to Springdale, which is on the railroad, for I have decided not to go to Woodland now that I have you to protect and see to a place of safety where your father can come and take you back home."

"You are very good to me. I shall always remember you with gratitude, and my father will reward you liberally."

"I don't want any reward for serving you. It is my duty to rescue you from your rascally abductors and see that you get back home in safety. Now I am going. Remember, follow with caution, for though I think you are in no danger, even if the woman found you were getting away, for I would get you away at all hazard, it is better that she be left in ignorance of your flight."

"I will do as you say," said the girl, pressing his hand to her heart.

Harry then walked out of the room and found the woman waiting for him at the head of the stairs.

They went down together, and without any delay passed out of the kitchen door and went to the barn.

Harry saddled his horse, secured his sample cases on his back and led him outside.

"Here's a dollar for you, ma'am, to pay you for the supper and the feed of my horse," he said.

"No, no. I don't want it," she said.

"You must take it," he said, pressing it into her trembling hand.

She locked the barn and they went as far as the house together.

"Good-by, ma'am. I hope you won't get into trouble over this. Here is my card, with my Chicago address. If you should ever stand in need of help, write to me, and I won't go back on you."

The woman made no reply, and he felt her standing near the door looking after him.

He was soon in the road, and after walking his horse a few yards he saw the white figure of Miss Carter awaiting him.

She rushed up and caught him by the arm.

"I am so happy to be out of that house," she said. "I shall never forget that you have aided me to escape."

"Don't mention it, Miss Carter. Now let me help you on my

horse. You can sit back of the saddle and hold on to me. As one of the cases will be in your way, your position will be a bit awkward, but I'm afraid you will have to put up with it under the circumstances."

"I will put up with anything to make my escape."

In a couple of minutes they were riding down the road.

The girl's position was rather ungraceful, and somewhat unpleasant, but she did not complain.

After they had gone a mile, Harry allowed the horse to walk for a while.

It took them more than an hour to reach the fork, where the road branched both to the left and right.

The left road led to Woodland, about a mile away, the right one direct to the village of Derby, eight miles away, whence he had started out that afternoon to go to Woodland.

It lay on the route to Springdale, with the village of Edgewater between.

As his watch noted the hour of 11:30, Harry did not see any use of going the shorter route, as the hotel at Woodland would probably be closed for the night.

In any case, he judged it expedient to carry Miss Carter to Springdale as soon as possible.

They would put up at the hotel where his trunk was, and he would telegraph to her father at Chicago to come on and get her.

As they had ridden nine miles since leaving the house, Harry judged that she would appreciate a short rest, so he dismounted and lifted her down.

"I guess you find riding that way hard on you, Miss Carter," he said.

"It isn't as hard as being locked up a prisoner in a room without knowing when you will be liberated," she replied.

"That's right. You say you've been in the hands of your abductors for a month?"

"Yes."

"I suppose the police have prevented your father from coming to terms with the rascals, hoping to catch the men napping?"

"I suppose so. I know my father wouldn't hesitate a moment in paying over the amount demanded if he saw no other way of getting me back."

"Of course he would if he could raise the money."

"He could get the money in a few days."

"Have you seen the men since they brought you to the house?"

"No, but I know they were there."

"Would you be able to identify them if they were caught?"

"No. They took me by surprise when they carried me off, and I didn't see their faces very well. All I could say is they wore heavy beards."

"Smith, the woman's husband, has a smooth face. He may not have been one of the three, or their beards may have been false ones, assumed as a disguise. Do you know, I think that woman is more to be pitied than blamed. She appears to be a slave to her husband. I noticed that she was afraid of him. I wouldn't like to see her suffer for the part she has acted in connection with yourself. I dare say she was obliged to act as your jailer."

"I have no fault to find with her. She prepared nice meals for me, and did many things to make me comfortable. She wouldn't talk with me, for she always acted as if she was afraid some one was listening at the door."

"Probably her husband often did, and she couldn't tell when his ear would be at the keyhole. Well, I guess we'd better start on again. We have some distance to go. Derby is eight miles from here, and we should get there by two o'clock. As it will be no use to stop there at that hour, I intend to push on to Edgewater, where we'll stop for breakfast and then go on to Springdale, where I'll register you at the hotel that I stopped at while doing the town. You can take a good long sleep there, and before I turn in myself I'll telegraph to your father."

They remounted the horse and went on their way.

CHAPTER V.

THE UPSET.

It was about half-past two when they reached Derby.

They dismounted in front of the hotel, which was shut up and dark, like all the stores and houses in the neighborhood.

In fact, not a light was to be seen in the village as far as they could see.

Harry tied the horse, after watering him at the trough, and then rejoined the girl, who was seated on the veranda steps.

After resting for half an hour they started for Edgewater.

Morning dawned some time before they came in sight of the place.

By and by the sun struggled at intervals through the clouds that still covered the sky to a considerable extent.

The night had been cold, and it wasn't much warmer now.

Harry had given his coat to Miss Carter as a protection, but as she necessarily had to hug close up to him, he didn't feel the absence of the garment as much as he otherwise would.

However, he was chivalrous enough to regard her comfort as the first consideration.

The village of Edgewater was beginning to stir itself into life when Harry stopped in front of the inn.

The porter, who was also the hostler and all-around factotum of the establishment, was sweeping out.

He stared at the new arrivals, and then recognized the young traveler.

He was evidently surprised to see the girl perched behind.

Harry dismounted, assisted Miss Carter to alight, and asked the man to fetch out a couple of chairs and take his horse around to the stable.

He removed his two cases and took them into the little office.

The girl was so tired and sleepy after her long ride and loss of rest that she looked all done up, and Harry decided that they must stop at the inn all forenoon and give her a chance to recuperate.

They had to wait an hour and a half before breakfast, and Miss Elsie went to sleep in the chair.

Harry registered their names when the proprietor appeared, and asked for a couple of rooms.

He explained that he was taking the young lady to Springdale.

After breakfast both retired to their rooms and slept through the whole morning, awakening much refreshed.

After dinner Harry called for his horse, and put Miss Carter in the saddle, walked beside her till they had left the village behind, when he resumed the saddle and the girl took her place as before.

They passed through two small villages on their way and reached the outskirts of Springdale at dark.

Here Harry got off, transferred the girl to the saddle, and walked the rest of the way to the hotel.

He secured two rooms and they went to supper.

After the meal they walked up the street to the telegraph office, where Harry sent the dispatch to Mr. Carter, getting his address from Elsie.

They turned in early, and in the morning they felt like their usual selves.

Harry decided to remain in town till Mr. Carter came for his daughter, for he feared an effort might be made by the man Smith to recover the girl.

At any rate, having rescued her, he did not propose to take any chances.

When he came downstairs at half-past seven a telegram was handed to him by the hotel clerk.

It was from the merchant, stating that he would take the next express the evening before for Springdale.

Harry and Elsie were coming out of the dining-room after breakfast when Mr. Carter entered the hotel, and in a few moments his daughter was in his arms.

The girl related her experiences from the moment she was kidnaped, and then Harry told his story.

Mr. Carter declared he would never forget the obligation the young traveler had placed him under, and wanted to pay him the reward he had offered the police—\$10,000—but Harry refused to accept it, or any sum whatever.

"All I'll take from you is the small expense I have been under on your daughter's account," he said.

As he was firm on that point, the merchant was obliged to yield.

He asked the boy about the business he was in, and how long he expected to be on the road.

Harry told him as near as he could figure out.

"When you return to Chicago you must call at my store," said Mr. Carter, "and I will give you a position as a clerk, or send you out on the road, as you prefer. In either case I will see that you have better opportunities for advancement than I fancy you are enjoying at present."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," said Harry, taking the business card of the firm which Mr. Carter was the head of. "I will not fail to call on you when I get back."

An hour later Elsie and her father, both blissfully happy,

and both grateful to the young traveler for his services in the young lady's behalf, took the express for Chicago, and Harry stood on the station waiting for his own local going the other way to come along, and waved them a good-by.

In the short time they had known each other, Harry and Elsie had become very well acquainted.

The long night horseback ride, where the girl was obliged to cling close to her rescuer in order to maintain her seat on the horse, naturally had a considerable influence in weaving a warm feeling of friendship between them.

Elsie was a pretty girl, though we have not mentioned the fact before, and Harry was not insensible to her many charms.

Harry was a good-looking, manly young fellow, and most girls admire those features in a boy.

There was a touch of romance in their meeting, and every girl dearly loves a bit of romance to creep into her life.

So it will not surprise the reader if their parting, for the time being, was marked by the interchange of promises to write to one another, and as the rapidly moving express went on its way Chicagoward, the thoughts of each other flew back and forth between them.

Harry's train came in fifteen minutes later, his trunk was thrown into the baggage car by the muscular train hands, and he was soon on his way to Millville, a large manufacturing town, where he expected to do a profitable business in his line.

A run of twenty-five miles brought him to Millville.

His trunk was unceremoniously dumped out on the platform with other inoffensive trunks, and the train went on.

He got into the bus that bore the name of the Commercial House, and was frequented by commercial travelers, traveling theatrical companies and baseball teams, after arranging with an expressman to transport his trunk there.

He busied himself before dinner, which was here served in the middle of the day, in picking up information about the business section of the town.

After dinner he started out to pick up orders.

As Hatch & Co. had no regular customers we might say, though the firm was not unknown to dealers who had dealt with them through other drummers, the amount of business Harry might do in Millville depended wholly on his ability to push his goods.

He was provided with a list of dealers who had previously bought of Hatch & Co., as well as other dealers who had not, and with his regular sample case he began his tour to take orders only.

His prices being low, and his line of samples attractive, he managed to secure several fair orders, which he later forwarded by mail to his firm.

He put in the evening at a show, and next morning he went out with both cases.

On this round he struck retail dealers and sold outright many things from his cases.

As he was paying his own expenses, railroad fare excepted, he depended on these cash sales for ready money, and a portion of his profit.

He spent the whole day on this tack, and then after supper he made inquiries regarding the outlying places, as was his custom.

He learned there was a small town to the south that was a live place.

He found he could get there by the daily stage.

The name of the town was Exeter.

Taking both cases he boarded the coach in the morning, with two other passengers, and was presently en route.

After leaving the outskirts of the town, the way ran along a shady country road, bordered by fields under cultivation, though it was early in the season.

The coach carried an express box and several pouches of mail.

At a cross-road the farmer who sat on the box seat with the driver got down.

A light wagon driven by a boy was awaiting him.

Harry took advantage of his leaving to get up alongside the driver himself.

He found the jehu a talkative sort of chap, who had been around a considerable part of the West, and time passed more pleasantly than it had inside with the three passengers, one of whom was a woman.

A few miles further on they came to another cross-road.

Here was a general store, a blacksmith's shop, and a small collection of houses.

Exeter was less than two miles away.

The driver watered his horses at the trough in front of the

store, handed the storekeeper a small bundle of papers and three letters, and bought a plug of tobacco.

The woman got out of the stage and started toward one of the houses with a bundle the driver handed down from the roof of the vehicle.

After a wait of ten minutes the stage went on.

Three-quarters of a mile further on the vehicle ascended a small hill, from the top of which Harry caught a distant view of the town over the tops of the trees of a woods below.

A wooden bridge was to be seen at the foot of the hill on that side.

The bridge spanned a narrow and shallow stream such as one often meets with in the country.

The driver pointed out a factory at the head of Main street which, he said, they would pass before they entered the town.

"What do they make there?" Harry asked.

"Novelties, they call the thingembobs they turn out. I drop one of the mail bags there. There are several express bundles for them, too, but I have to take 'em on to the express office. I carry a big load of mail back with me, goods they are sending out all over the country. I get the bags at the post-office, not at the factory, and I carry a bunch of their express matter, too."

"How is it that you deliver the mail to the factory? I should think you'd have to take it to the post-office," said Harry.

"They have an arrangement with the Millville post-office on account of the amount of mail matter they receive. It saves time for them, and enables them to fill orders in time for me to take back a part of them this afternoon. They have quite a bunch of registered mail, too, but that I have to take to the post-office, and they get it from there."

"I see," said Harry, as the horses struck the bridge and dashed across it.

He saw something else the next moment.

It was the sudden dipping of the forward end of the bridge. He saw it too late to call the driver's attention to it.

He grasped the jehu's arm and opened his mouth to speak, when with a crash the bridge sank at the left corner, the horses slid off into the water, with the stage pressing them forward, and then as a second crash resounded on the calm air, the vehicle turned over on its side, tossing the young traveler into the stream, and the driver after him, and then landed at an angle of forty-five degrees.

The two men inside were thrown into a heap and in a great peril from suffocation by the inrushing water.

Three men appeared as if by magic from the bushes and rushed to the assistance of the coach.

One clambered on the upturned side and pulled the door open.

He reached down and helped the passengers out, awkwardly shoving both into the stream, which was not deep enough to drown them.

The other two began rescuing the mail bags and the express box.

They dropped them into a rowboat which they pulled out from under the bridge.

Harry was trying to reach the bridge when he saw his two cases of samples go into the boat after the express box.

One of the men stepped into the boat, shoved it under the bridge away from the half submerged coach, and out at the other side, while the other two men offered a hand to the passengers to assist them up on the steep bank.

The first thing the driver did was to release the horses, and Harry helped him do it.

"They can't get up here. We'll have to lead them down a bit to the ford," said the driver.

It took fully fifteen minutes for them to get the animals ashore and back to the side of the bridge nearest the town.

"I don't understand how that bridge could have given way," said the jehu. "It is a strong structure, and was all right when I passed over it yesterday afternoon. The bank must have suddenly given way at the corner on this side. The water probably undermined it during the spring freshet. This places me in a nice fix. Some one will have to go on to town for help to pull out the stage. I've got to stay here and watch the mail bags and the express box. You can help me get them out. You can't get much wetter than you are."

"Two of those men pulled them out and placed them in a rowboat with my sample cases. All you'll have to do will be to watch the boat which they shoved under the bridge," said Harry.

"Good. That saves me some trouble. I dare say one of the men will go on to town for me."

"I don't see them now," said Harry, as they approached

the broken end of the bridge with the horses. "There's your two passengers, but the men have gone away."

"They've gone to town to carry the news," said the driver.

Apparently they had, for on asking the two passengers, one of them said the two men had started off down the road as soon as they had helped them ashore, saying they were going for help.

They could not be seen as the road turned sharply to the right a hundred yards away.

"Where's the other man, there were three of them," said Harry. "He must be in the boat on the other side of the bridge."

Harry stepped to the other side and looked down.

He saw no boat.

He peered under the broken bridge, but the boat wasn't there.

He looked up the stream as far as he could see the water through the trees, that grew close down to it, but as the stream turned off close by, he saw nothing of the boat or the man.

"That man has rowed the boat away with your mail bags and my property. Can he reach town with them that way?" Harry asked the driver.

"What's that? What are you talking about?" said the jehu. Harry explained more clearly.

"What in thunder did he do that for?" roared the driver. "Of course he can't reach town that way. The stream runs away from the town right through the woods. Are you sure he carried off the mail bags?"

"I'm positive, for I saw him and one of the other men pull the bags, the express box and my sample cases out from under the seat and drop them into the boat. Then one of the men got in and rowed the boat under the bridge. I suppose he intended to tie it there, on the other side, away from the broken end. I hope those fellows are not thieves. I don't want to lose my cases any more than you do the mail bags and express box."

The driver uttered an imprecation and began dancing around like a wild man.

CHAPTER VI.

TRACKING THE THIEVES.

"Did you see a man row a boat up into the woods with the mail bags in it?" he excitedly asked the two passengers.

No; they had not seen the man row the boat up the stream, but they had seen two of the men getting the bags out of the overturned coach and drop them into a boat between the bridge and the vehicle.

What had become of the boat with its contents they did not know.

"Where did the men come from, did any one notice?" asked the driver.

Under the strenuous circumstances no one had noticed, not even the jehu, who had had the best chance of seeing.

All anybody could say was that they were right upon the scene when the accident took place, though they were not in sight the instant before.

"If the mail bags and the express box have been stolen I'll be in a pretty pickle," said the driver, with a worried look.

"I'll run into the woods and follow the stream and see if I can find any trace of the boat," said Harry, who was more concerned about his own property than about the mail pouches and express box.

"Do so and I'll go too. Scramble across the bridge, you're lighter than I am, and take the other side. I'll follow this side."

The driver sat down, took off his boots and emptied out the water.

Harry took off his shoes and stockings, got rid of the superfluous moisture and put them on again.

He was soaked to the skin, as were the driver and the passengers, and the quartette were not feeling very comfortable.

The young traveler crossed the shaky remains of the bridge and rushed into the woods, while the driver entered on that side.

Harry, being the more active of the two, soon distanced the driver.

The stream did not go straight at any point, but wound through the woods like a long snake.

The boy followed its course, but he saw no sign of the boat. Not a sound reached his ears but what he made himself.

He hustled along to keep off the chill of his wet garments,

and after going perhaps half a mile he came out of the woods into a field.

A quarter of a mile away he saw a farmhouse. In the next field two men were working.

Fields stretched away on the opposite side of the stream, and there was another farmhouse over there.

He was now able to get a better view of the stream, which ran straight until it was lost in the distance, but he saw no boat upon it.

However, he knew the boat had passed that way and he did not pause.

Without his sample cases there was no use for him to turn back and go on to town.

When he got on a line with the farm-house on his side, he suddenly came upon a boat tied to the bank.

He stopped and looked at it.

It was wet inside in places and he believed it was the boat he was after.

There was nothing in it but a pair of oars thrown carelessly along the two seats, and they were dripping as if from recent use.

"I'll bet the other two men rejoined the chap in the boat along here somewhere and the three have carried off the pouches, express box and my cases between them."

And yet that looked something like a feat for three men to do, particularly at a spot where they would be likely to invite observation.

While he was considering the matter he noticed the parallel ruts made by wagon wheels.

The ruts looked fresh, and this convinced him the men had had a wagon waiting here to aid them.

The ruts led straight toward the farm-house, and Harry followed the tracks.

When he reached the fence that cut off the field he saw a lane began there and ran past the farm-yard.

The rails must have been removed to permit the wagon to pass through.

At any rate, the tracks went straight on under the fence.

The wagon ruts were not so clear in the lane, and were soon lost in a multitude of other wagon tracks by the farmer's wagon.

However, that didn't greatly matter—the wagon went down the lane to the road beyond.

Harry walked over to the farm-house to make a few convincing inquiries.

The farmer's wife came to the back door and stared at him.

Well she might in his damp and mussed condition.

"For gracious sake! Hev you been in the river, young man?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am. I was a passenger on the stage going to Exeter. The bridge broke down and dumped us all into the stream."

"You don't say. The bridge broke down, did it? How came it to break down?"

"I couldn't tell you, ma'am. I want to ask you a question or two."

"I'll listen to you, but you'd better come inside. I've got a spare room where you can take your things off, and I'll loan you some of my husband's clothes to put on while your own are drying. You'll get your death of cold going around that way."

"Thank you, ma'am, I guess I'll have to accept your kind offer. I suppose there isn't any use of my following the wagon that came through here a little while ago from the stream below, for I couldn't overtake it on foot. You saw the wagon, didn't you?"

"You mean the wagon that went to the river to meet a boat and get some stuff off her?"

"Yes. There were three men in it."

"There was. One of them came to the house and asked permission to let down the fence and cross the meadow. I let 'em do it."

"Were the men strangers to you?"

"They were. Are they friends of yours?"

"No. They are charged with stealing the mail pouches and other things from the stage after the vehicle fell into the stream when the bridge broke down."

"For goodness sake!"

"Did you see the wagon when it came back?"

"I saw it coming across the meadow, but I didn't pay no attention to it."

"The three men were in it, then?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"Your lane connects with a road?"

"Of course."

"Where does it lead to?"

"It runs through the woods into the Exeter highway one way, and off that direction to Clayton Center and beyond," said the woman, waving her arm.

As the men wouldn't be likely to go toward Exeter, Harry judged that the wagon, with the stolen mail bags and other things, was driven toward Clayton Center.

To attempt to follow it on foot in his condition seemed useless, so he accepted the woman's hospitality, went to the spare room, removed his clothes and put on the garments she supplied him with.

The farmer's wife put his under garments through the wringer, and squeezed the moisture out of the others by hand, after which she hung them near the fire.

By that time it was close to noon, and she had to hustle to get the dinner on the table for her husband and the two hired men.

Harry told his story to the farmer, and he consented to lend the boy a horse to ride to Clayton Center to notify the police at that place.

The young traveler took dinner with the family, and an hour later his clothes were dry enough for him to put on.

He mounted the horse, and provided with the direction he was to take, he started off, somewhat dubious as to the outcome of his ride.

Clayton Center was five miles away.

He had covered four miles when he came up with a wagon which had broken down.

It was drawn up close to the fence, and a horse was tied to a tree near it.

It struck Harry that this might be the wagon he was after. While looking at it he saw something sticking in the bushes.

He went to see what it was and discovered it was a mail pouch marked Exeter Novelty Co.

That settled the matter.

The pouch had been slit open and its contents taken out.

A second pouch, marked "S. S. Mail," lay underneath.

This had also been cut open and rifled.

An upper rail in the fence was down, and Harry guessed the men had abandoned the horse and the disabled wagon and gone off that way.

Harry took down two more rails and led his horse into the meadow.

Then mounting, he galloped across it.

This brought him to another wood, a small one, and he pushed slowly through it.

Suddenly he saw the outline of a house ahead.

Suspecting that the men might be in hiding there, he dismounted, tied his horse and advanced toward the house on foot.

The building, which was little better than a hut, a story and a half high, stood in a small clearing.

The trees came within a few feet of the rear of it, and Harry worked around to that part of it.

He listened for some sound that would indicate that the hut had occupants, but he heard nothing, so he ventured to approach the only window he saw.

Looking through the cracked pane, he saw three men squatting on the floor, opening envelopes and examining their contents.

Beside each man was a pile of discarded envelopes and their written enclosures.

In the center of the group was a pile of money orders, another pile of bills, and a third pile of silver coin, mostly ten-cent pieces and quarters.

Harry knew at the first look that he had run the three thieves down at last.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXPLOSION.

The men had almost finished going through the mail.

The last of the registered letters were in their hands.

One slit mail pouch lay over in the corner where they had thrown it after dumping out its contents.

Near by was the express box, still untouched, and the boy's sample cases.

Harry was afraid one of them, the fellow facing the window, would see him, and he took his face from the window.

"What can I do now against the three of them?" he said to himself. "They are stout chaps, and any one of them could handle me."

It was a problem and a serious one.

He ventured to take another look.

They had finished with the last envelope, and one of them was sorting out the bills, another the silver, while the third was figuring up the money orders, which were really of no use to them.

Harry crept around to the other side where there was another window, and looked in there.

The man with the money orders was tying them in a bunch with a piece of string.

The other two men were dividing the money in three piles.

The fellow laid the money orders down, picked up the pouch and began cramming the envelopes and written sheets into it.

This done, he dragged it up the steps leading to the loft and threw it there.

He was gone a few minutes.

When he came back he had something in his hand.

It was a metallic cannister enclosed in a covering of stout wire.

"What have you got there?" asked one of his companions.

"Search me! There's a tag on it. Maybe that will explain what it is."

He looked at the tag and saw the following words printed on it in big black type:

"Handle with Care. Nitro-Glycerine. Jessup & Co."

"Holy smoke!" gasped the man.

"Take it out of the shanty! Throw it away!" roared the other, in a hurried tone and with a look of consternation which was shared by all three.

"Where'll I throw it? It might go off and arouse the neighborhood. That would bring the farm hands on the run to see what had happened. I'll bet the report would be heard in Clayton Center."

"Take it into the wood and lay it down carefully—in a hole or in the bushes. Get a move on you. It gives me the shakes to see it in your hand. If you dropped it we might all be blown to perdition."

Hal heard every word and was not a little alarmed himself.

He knew the terrific explosive power of nitro-glycerine, and there was enough in the cannister, perhaps, to blow the building and all in it to pieces.

He decided to get out of the way till the man had disposed of the cannister.

He retired a dozen yards into the woods and waited.

Suddenly a terrific explosion shattered the air.

The trees shook all around the boy, and the ground trembled under him.

A rush of air full of unseen power passed through the trees and staggered him.

Though fifty feet from the shanty, and in a manner protected by the trees, the shock was almost heavy enough to stun the boy.

The clearing was full of smoke and flying splinters of wood, and many sizable pieces of the latter were thrown around Harry.

"My gracious! I'll bet somebody has got hurt," said the young traveler, as he peered through the trees and saw the dense vapor that hung about the clearing.

He couldn't see a sign of the shanty, and it struck him it had either been blown to pieces with its occupants, or else leveled with the ground.

"Heavens! If that cannister went off inside the house the men have been surely wiped out; and I guess their plunder and my sample cases have been scattered to the winds. Great smoke! What a terrible death. Why, the shock staggered me here."

The smoke gradually rose and thinned out.

Then Harry ventured to investigate the situation.

He walked slowly forward till he reached the edge of the clearing.

Looking out, he saw that the shanty had partially collapsed and was all down on one side.

The roof had come off and lay upside down on the ground.

One of the walls lay over against it, and that seemed to be the reason why the shanty had not gone entirely to pieces.

As it was, the wreck was so bad that Harry did not believe the inmates could have escaped instant death.

Harry was satisfied that the cannister had not exploded inside the building, for had it done so the shanty would have been scattered around the clearing, and reduced to mere kindling wood.

This impression was confirmed when he walked out into the open space.

It was then easy to see where the explosive had gone off.

A great gap was torn in the trees on the other side, and a big hole showed in the ground.

Fully a score of trees had suffered—some being entirely torn up and shattered, while others hung over, half uprooted, and still others were bent and broken.

"That fellow must have thrown that cannister toward the bushes, and it hit a tree and exploded," thought Harry.

He went to the hole and looked at it.

As his gaze swept the gap in the trees he was shocked to see a man's leg from the knee down hanging to a limb by the torn trouser's leg.

That told him the fate of the fellow who had found the cannister.

He had been blown to pieces on the spot where the explosion took place.

"I don't see how the thing could have gone off if he was carrying it carefully, as one would naturally handle such an article," thought Harry.

The real fact of the matter was the man's foot had caught on a ground creeper and he had been thrown violently forward.

The cannister, escaping from his hands, struck a large stone and the shock did the business.

The tragedy occurred so quickly that the unfortunate man never knew what happened to him.

Harry went to the collapsed shanty.

He was certain the other two men were in the debris, but whether dead or badly hurt he could not say.

He pulled away some of the timbers and brought to light his sample cases and the express box uninjured to any extent.

He pulled them out, but as the building threatened to go to pieces he was afraid to push his inspection further until help arrived, which he looked for, since the explosion was sure to have attracted a lot of attention in the vicinity, and curiosity would be rife as to the cause of it.

He listened at the opening he had made, but did not hear a sound from the interior, which was ominous of the fate of those inside.

In a few minutes the nearest farmer and one of his hands appeared.

"Hello, what has happened here?" asked the farmer, looking at Harry.

"You can see for yourself what has happened," replied the boy.

"There was a heavy explosion. What caused it?"

"A cannister of nitro-glycerine."

"Whew! Where were you at the time? You do not appear to be hurt."

"I was in the wood close by. I was close enough to catch a good part of the shock."

"It went off in the shanty, I suppose?"

"No, it didn't. It exploded where you see that hole in the trees and in the ground. The man who carried the cannister was blown to pieces."

"How do you know?"

"Part of a man's leg is hanging yonder, and that is pretty suggestive."

"Where?"

"I'll show you," and he took the farmer and his hand over to the gap and pointed out the ghastly object.

While they were looking at it another farmer showed up.

"There are two men in the ruins of the shanty, but whether they are alive or not I can't say. We must dig them out," said Harry.

"Did you see the men?"

"I saw them in there before the explosion, but not since."

"I wonder where they got the nitro-glycerine. Do you know anything about it?"

"The man whose leg is hanging there found it in the attic of the shanty."

"Did you belong to this party?"

"No."

"Then how do you happen to know so much, and yet be the only one to escape?" asked the first farmer, suspiciously.

"If you want to know the truth, I was following these men."

"Following them? What for?"

"They wrecked the bridge on the outskirts of Exeter this morning, and dumped the coach into the stream. I was a passenger and followed the vehicle into the water with the driver and two other passengers. While we were extricating ourselves and the horses, these men stole the mail pouches, the express box and my sample cases—I'm a traveling salesman and was on my way to Exeter at the time. They got away with the articles in a boat, went up the stream about three-quarters of a mile or so, and transferred their plunder to a wagon they had in waiting. I learned all that by following them, though I did not come up with them at that time."

Harry told the balance of his story up to the moment the explosion occurred, and his auditors were not a little astonished.

"You will find ample proof in the ruins that my story is true, for one of the mail pouches is there with the letters. The money ought to be there, too," said Harry.

They began work on the ruins at once, and while thus engaged another man arrived on the scene.

He was invited to help.

The boards were carefully lifted and thrown aside.

Where it became necessary to detach them extra care was used.

Presently the legs of a man were exposed.

The timbers were raised sufficiently to drag him out.

He was not dead, but the extent of his injuries could not be told.

He was unconscious and one of the farmers, after an examination, gave it as his opinion that the man was not fatally hurt.

Soon afterward the second man was got out, and his condition was similar to his companion's.

Harry discovered that each of the men had a bunch of money in his pocket, and he judged that represented their share of the plunder.

If the balance had been on the dead man's person at the time he was blown to bits, then it was scattered to the four winds.

Possibly some of it would be found later, bit by bit, by boys or others going through that part of the wood.

The wreck, however, was cleared away to enable the workers to make a thorough search of the inside of the demolished shanty.

The bag full of rifled letters was found, and this confirmed Harry's statement.

By this time more people had come there, and Harry had to tell his story over again to satisfy their curiosity.

One of the farmers offered to provide a wagon to carry the senseless men, the express box, Harry's cases, and the rifled pouches, for the young traveler mentioned the two pouches he had seen in the bushes along the roadside.

The farmer's offer was gladly accepted by Harry, who was conceded to be the best person to assume full charge of matters.

Under his direction the two thieves and all property were carried to the farmer's house by the crowd, loaded on a light wagon, in charge of the farmer's son, and was driven to the road, where the other pouches were recovered.

Harry followed on his horse, and the farmer who had loaned the wagon took charge of the horse tied to the tree in the road, and his son subsequently hauled the wagon up to their yard.

Although Clayton Center was but a mile away, while Exeter was all of five, and the bridge at the road was not passable, unless it had been repaired, the young traveler decided to go to the latter place, as the crime had been committed within, or at least on the edge of, that township.

By going a quarter of a mile out of the way the wagon would be able to ford the stream.

They started for Exeter at a good pace, Harry riding beside the wagon.

When they reached the lane of the farm where Harry had got the loan of the horse, he told the farmer's son to wait till he returned the animal.

The woman met him in the yard.

"You're back, I see. You didn't catch the men, I guess. What was that explosion I heard in the direction of Clayton Center?" she asked.

"Well, ma'am, I was within sixty feet or so of the spot where the explosion happened, and it was a stunner, I can tell you."

"For goodness sake! What caused it?"

"Nitro-glycerine, one of the most powerful of explosives. It blew one man to pieces."

"My gracious! Is it possible? How did you escape?"

"I haven't time to tell you the facts now. I will simply say that I caught two of the men, and have recovered the larger part of the stolen property, including my own."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, ma'am, thanks to your husband for the use of his horse. I will also tell you that the chap who was blown to bits was the third thief. One of his legs, all I could find of him, is still hanging from the branch of a tree in the wood where the nitro-glycerine went off."

"For heaven's sake!"

"Now I will say good-by. It is possible I may call on you with some small token of my appreciation for your kindness

before I go back to Millville, and then I will tell you the whole story of what happened to me since I left this farm after dinner."

Harry lifted his hat, bowed and returned to the road where he found the wagon waiting for him and the two men still unconscious.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARRY MEETS A RIVAL.

Following the road, they passed through the wood where the stream was, and in a few minutes reached the county road not far from the bridge.

Here they found that the bridge had been repaired—a gang of men having been engaged on it for several hours.

They drove across, and inside of ten minutes the farmer's son reined up in front of the novelty factory.

Harry got down and went into the office.

"Can I see the manager?" he asked.

He was admitted to the private office, where he found a florid man of forty at his desk.

"I came to notify you that I have caught two of the three men who robbed the coach this morning of the mail bags and other property. The third man is dead," said Harry, abruptly, as the gentleman turned to him.

The manager stared at him.

"You've caught two of the men! Are you connected with the police?" asked the gentleman.

"No, sir. I'm a commercial traveler, and was one of the passengers on the coach when the accident took place at the bridge. The two men are now in a wagon outside, unconscious, and I am taking them to the station-house to hand them over to the police. As they have a large part of the money they stole from the letters on their persons, I think you had better go along with us."

"I will do so," said the manager, reaching for his hat.

Room was found on the seat for him, and the wagon proceeded to the station-house.

The crime had been reported hours before by the driver of the coach, and half a dozen policemen were out looking for the three men.

Harry surprised the authorities when he said he had two of the thieves in the wagon outside, and that the third one was dead.

The senseless men were brought into the station-house, and the police wanted to know how they came to be in that condition.

Harry told his story from beginning to end, detailing how he had gone looking for the rascals, how he obtained his first clew on seeing the broken-down wagon drawn up by the roadside, and discovered the empty mail pouches in the bushes; how he had followed the clew to the wood and found the three men rifling the letters in the shanty; how one of them found the cannister of nitro-glycerine in the attic, and how the finding thereof led to the explosion, his death, and the capture of the others who had not yet recovered from the effects of the shock which had brought the shanty down about their heads.

Harry's story was a most unusual one, and proved he was an exceptional young chap.

The factory manager declared that he had the instincts of a detective.

A doctor was sent for to bring the men around, and while waiting for him the fellows' pockets were searched and the money taken possession of by the police.

"You mustn't leave town without notifying us of your intention to do so," said the captain of the police to Harry. "Where are you going to stop?"

"I don't know yet. I never was here before and know nothing about the hotels. Perhaps you'll give me a line on them."

"The Exeter House is the best—\$2.50 a day. Then there's Smith's Hotel, that's a \$2 house; and the American House, \$1 and upward, on the European plan."

"I guess I'll go to Smith's. We travelers get a rebate on the regular tariff. Where is it situated?"

"I'll show you," said the manager. "We'll pass it on the way to the post-office and express office."

The officer at the desk put down Smith's Hotel as Harry's address, and he was told a policeman would call next morning on him if the men were brought up for examination and take him to court.

"I shall probably start out early on a tour of the dealers in my line," said Harry, "but I'll make it a point to return to the hotel at any hour you name."

"If the officer calls it will be about eleven."

"All right," replied Harry, who then left the station-house with the manager of the novelty factory.

Harry left the express box at the office of the express company, and the manager was pleased to death to get it untampered with.

He took down the boy's name and temporary address, and Harry also handed him a business card of his firm.

Then they went on to the post-office around the corner and delivered the slit mail bags with their contents stuffed in one of them.

The money orders had not been recovered, and were presumably in the pocket of the man killed by the explosion.

As the man's remains were widely scattered in small pieces, the chances of the money orders ever turning up were small.

The postmaster was informed that at least two-thirds of the money which had been in the registered and other letters was in the hands of the authorities, and probably would be held as evidence.

The manager of the factory said that he hoped the postmaster would have the opened letters sorted out at once so the factory could get those addressed to it. He would fill all orders except those that he could identify as having held money orders, and the senders of those he would communicate with so they could apply for duplicate orders.

The postmaster listened to Harry's story, took his name and business card, and then Harry, after dismissing the farmer's son with the wagon, went to Smith's Hotel and registered.

Supper being ready, he went to the dining-room and partook of it.

After the meal he went to the reading-room and wrote a long letter to Elsie Carter, describing his experience of the day.

Before he was half through a visitor called to see him.

This was a reporter of the Exeter Times, who was after his story.

Harry submitted to be interviewed, after which the young scribe invited him out to take a drink.

Harry politely refused to imbibe, as he never drank strong liquors.

"Take a cigar, then," said the newspaper man.

"I don't smoke, either."

"Upon my word, you're something unusual in the traveling salesman line. How do you get along? Many of the people you deal with expect to be treated. If there is any business where drinking is a part of the game, it seems to me it's the traveling salesman. I've met lots of them—mostly jolly good fellows—and I fail to recall one who didn't hold his end up at the bar. A fellow can hardly be sociable if he does not drink or smoke," said the reporter.

"Well, I've managed to get along so far without patronizing a saloon," replied Harry. "And I shall try and continue along the same lines. I don't find any fault with other people for drinking if they wish to do so, but with respect to myself it is against my principles and tastes. If I can't make things go without having to drink, I'll quit the business and take to something else."

That wound up the interview and Harry went on with his letter.

Then feeling tired, he went to bed.

After an early breakfast he started out on his round.

He found Exeter a town of more importance than he had anticipated.

As the town was not down on his route, showing that no other traveler for his firm had been there, he had no list of dealers in his line to guide him.

He got over that by consulting a business directory, published in Millville, and taking in Exeter and one or two other places of similar size.

As the morning daily printed a graphic account of his experience with, and capture of, the coach thieves, giving him the full credit of running the men down, and recovering the larger part of their plunder, he was recognized at each place he visited, and as a result he did three times as much business as he otherwise would have done.

In consequence, his visit to Exeter was a big success, and he did not mind the necessity of remaining over to appear against the two rascals.

He returned to the hotel at eleven, met the policeman who was waiting for him, and accompanied him to the court.

The two rascals had recovered from the shock they experienced, and were brought before the bar to plead.

As their last recollection was associated with the shanty in the woods, they naturally were surprised to find themselves in the hands of the police when they regained their senses.

How this misfortune had come about they did not learn until they heard Harry's story in the witness chair after they had pleaded "not guilty."

Then the matter was plain to them, and their feelings toward the young traveler were anything but friendly.

The magistrate held them for trial and they were sent back to jail.

After dinner Harry continued his round and, as we have remarked, he did a good business.

The next day was Sunday, and as the coach did not run, the young traveler found he would have to remain in Exeter till Monday afternoon unless he hired a private conveyance to take him to Millville.

As he had received an invitation from the manager of the factory to dine at his house, Harry did not worry about leaving the town, particularly as there were a number of small stores where he expected to pull off some cash sales on Monday morning.

After breakfast next morning Harry went out for a walk. He found the town as dead as a village.

There was absolutely nothing doing except at the churches. Even the side doors of the saloons were hermetically sealed, as were also the barber shops.

As soon as he left the business section he found himself surrounded by private residences strung along tree-lined streets.

The general aspect of the residential section was that of a large village.

He extended his walk to the White farm, where he had borrowed the horse to chase the thieves.

In his pocket he carried one of his watches for the farmer, another for his son, and a number of pieces of cheap but attractive looking jewelry for Mrs. White.

He received a hearty welcome, and was regarded as something of a hero, for the family had read the story of his exploit in the town paper.

He was pressed to remain to dinner, but declined owing to his previous engagement.

The farmer's son, however, hitched up the buggy and drove him back to his hotel.

At two o'clock he presented himself at the manager's house and took dinner there, remaining till dark.

Next morning he finished up the town and was ready to take the coach back at three.

He rode all the way with the driver, who was under censure for having lost the mail pouches.

He took the evening local for Danville, his next stopping point on his regular route, reached that place about ten o'clock, and registered at the Danville Hotel.

This place was a fair-sized city and boasted three theaters, besides other places of amusement.

There were a number of drummers at the hotel, and among the bunch was a man of thirty, named Alex Judson, in a similar line to Harry.

He had just arrived, too, and finding an acquaintance at the hotel was drinking with him in the bar when Harry reached the house.

Judson was a shifty individual, but an experienced salesman. He and Harry came together at a large wholesale establishment on the principal street next morning.

Judson took a look at the young traveler and asked him if he was selling goods, rather a superfluous question, as the boy's sample case spoke for him.

"Yes," replied Harry, pleasantly. "You're a drummer, too?"

"I am. There isn't any use of you waiting here; Jenkins always buys from me."

This was a pure bluff, as Judson had only sold one small order at that store before.

It was a trick to get rid of his young rival, who looked bright and smart, and might cut into his opportunity to do business with the proprietor, for as Harry was on hand first he was entitled to the first interview.

It didn't work.

"Well, as I've called, I intend to see Mr. Jenkins," said the young traveler. "I have some unusually good things, and I hope to interest him in them."

"You'll only waste your breath. How long have you been on the road?"

"This is my first trip."

"I thought so. You look pretty verdant. Jenkins hasn't any time to waste on guys like you. You'll save time by moving on."

Harry made no reply.

He had no intention of moving on till he saw the boss of the house.

On a shelf in the waiting-room stood a case of the best grade of cheap watches.

A clerk had left them there because the proprietor was engaged, and went to wait on a customer.

Judson, finding Harry wasn't going to move, got up and looked at the different articles on the shelves.

He looked into the case holding the watches, and sized up their value.

Then he walked to the door and looked into the store.

At that moment the visitor in the private room came out and Harry went in.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STOLEN CASE OF WATCHES.

Harry introduced himself to Mr. Jenkins, opened his sample case, and got down to business.

It happened that the proprietor of the store was shy on the line of goods Harry had to offer, and as they appealed to him, he gave the boy a liberal order.

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, after Jenkins had signed the order—the biggest single one the young traveler had taken so far on his trip. "This will be a great help to me."

"You are new to the road, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I guess you'll get along all right, for you're full of business."

"The man outside who is waiting to see you, and is in the same line as myself, told me I would only lose my time trying to do business with you. He said you never wasted any of your time with new drummers."

"He was trying to get you out of the way," smiled Jenkins, who was wise to the ways of traveling men.

"I never take those kind of tips," laughed the boy. "If I did I wouldn't do much business where I had a rival."

"That's right," nodded the man. "You've got ahead of this one. I have bought about all I want of your line of goods. I don't think I will be able to do any business with this competitor of yours."

"He told me you always bought from him."

Jenkins got up, went to the door and looked into the waiting-room.

He recognized Judson as a man he had done some business with, though not a whole lot.

He didn't like the man much, and was not predisposed to do any more with him.

"Oh, that's Alex Judson," he said, walking back to his desk. "When he told you I always bought from him he did not tell the truth. I bought one order from him, and the goods were not wholly satisfactory. I shall do nothing with him now."

"You'll find Hatch & Co.'s goods just what I have represented them to be, for you have bought from their regular line of standard articles. I carry a cheaper grade, too, but they are not warranted, and I sell them only for cash in the villages, and to retail storekeepers. I wouldn't show them to you."

Harry then took his leave and Judson walked in.

He walked out soon afterward, much disgusted, for Jenkins told him he had purchased all the goods he wanted from his young rival.

He remained in the waiting-room a few minutes and then left, with a mental resolve to get square with the boy traveler.

In the meantime Harry went on to the next wholesale house in his line and captured an order there.

Judson followed him and was turned down.

He swore under his breath when he learned that the boy had been there.

Judson would have met Harry in the next store if he hadn't stopped to drink and waste time in a corner saloon.

He would have stood a good show to have got ahead of Harry in that store, because the proprietor was prejudiced against boys as drummers, and it took a great deal of tact and genial talk on Harry's part to overcome his objection.

Having the field entirely to himself, he finally succeeded in selling the man a bill of goods.

After he had departed for the next house, Judson came along and did nothing.

Harry cleaned up his regular order business by three o'clock and then went out with both cases.

He returned to the hotel at seven and got his supper.

When he came out two men were standing near the desk talking to Judson.

"There he is now," said Judson, pointing at Harry. The two men went up to him.

"Your name is Harry Green?" said the one with a chin beard.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, wondering who the men were.

"You're a drummer for Hatch & Co., of Chicago?"

"That's right."

"You called at the store of William Jenkins this morning after an order?"

"Yes."

"I am the chief salesman of that place."

"Well?"

"You were alone in the waiting-room for a while before you saw Mr. Jenkins?"

"Yes, sir; about ten minutes, then another salesman in my line came in—a man named Judson. I left him there when I went into the private office."

"Alone?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, much surprised at the line of questioning.

"While you were in the waiting-room did you see a case of engineers' watches on one of the shelves?"

"No, sir; I didn't notice it. There were quite a number of things on the shelves."

"This particular case was by itself."

"I don't remember seeing it. I didn't go near the shelves at all. Mr. Judson did. He might have noticed the case of watches. There's the gentleman talking to the clerk at the desk."

Judson was called over.

"This young man says he didn't go near the shelves, but that you did," said the Jenkins salesman.

"He's a liar," said Judson, hotly. "I saw him monkeying with that case of watches, and if it's missing I'll bet he took them and slipped them under his coat."

"How dare you make such a statement, Mr. Judson?" demanded Harry, angrily. "You know it is false."

"You can't sneak out of it that way, you young geezer. If I were you folks I'd search his cases and his trunk."

"I have no objection, but to make the thing fair they ought to search yours, too."

"They shall do it, if only to show what a liar you are."

"I haven't accused you of taking anything. All I said was you were inspecting the shelves in Mr. Jenkins' waiting-room."

"You said that to implicate me. I didn't go near the shelves."

"I am ready to swear that you did."

"You'd swear to anything to get out of your predicament."

"Gentlemen, if you will show me your authority to act in this matter I'll let you examine my sample cases and also my trunk. The latter is in the store-room."

"I told you I was Mr. Jenkins' chief salesman. My name is Jones. This man is a detective. Show him your badge," said the man with the chin whiskers.

The officer did so.

"Very well," said Harry. "If you suspect me of stealing a case of watches, or anything else from Mr. Jenkins' store, I shall be glad to prove that I didn't."

Harry got his sample cases, opened them and let the two men look them over.

Nothing was found in them that did not belong there.

"He wouldn't have them in his sample cases," said Judson. "Look in his trunk. That's the place to find them, if anywhere."

The porter was called to open the store-room.

Harry pointed out his trunk among several there, and handed the key to Salesman Jones.

That man unlocked the trunk.

The upper tray was filled with clothes.

These were carefully lifted out and the space underneath examined.

A flat case, twelve by eighteen, lay revealed.

Judson swooped down upon it.

He opened it and exposed a dozen new watches.

Harry was amazed.

The missing jewelry was in his trunk.

Judson grabbed him.

"You young thief!" he bellowed. "I've caught you with the goods. It's jail for yours now."

The searcher held up some more of the missing property.

"I am afraid, young man, you are guilty," said Salesman Jones.

"I know nothing about that case of watches or the other articles you have found. I could not have put them in my trunk,"

for I have not been near the store-room to-day. The porter will tell you that," protested Harry.

"This porter hasn't been on duty all day," said Judson.

"Yes, I have," said the man. "This young man wasn't in the store-room to-day, but you were. And I guess you know how that case of watches got in his trunk."

"What's that?" roared Judson, turning color.

"I let you in the store-room after dinner."

"What of it?"

"You sent me upstairs for a sheet of paper."

"Well, what if I did. You brought it to me."

"I guess I came back quicker'n you thought. I saw you putting that case in that trunk. I didn't think anything of it, for I supposed the trunk was yours. Now I know it belongs to that young chap, and as you've accused him of stealing that case of watches, I guess you've put up the job on him to get him in trouble. That's the whole story."

"You infernal liar!" howled Judson, launching out his fist and knocking the porter down.

"Hold on," said the detective, seizing him.

The man sprang up and rushed at Judson.

The officer stopped him.

"The man is a liar," said Judson. "How could I get into that chap's trunk without a key?"

"I saw you toss something into that corner," said the porter. "Maybe it was the key you used."

He rushed over to the corner, and in a moment came back with a new key, which he held up.

"See if that fits the trunk," he said.

It was found to fit the lock perfectly.

"What have you to say about this man's accusation?" asked the detective of Judson.

"What I said before—that he's a liar."

"Gentlemen, wasn't it this man Judson that accused me in the first place?" said Harry.

They admitted it was.

"Wasn't it he who proposed that my trunk be searched?"

"Yes," said Jones.

"Hasn't he shown animosity toward me right along in this matter?"

There was no doubt about that.

"Then, gentlemen, I leave you to judge, in the face of the porter's statement, which of us took those watches from the Jenkins store."

"I will take you both, with the porter, to the station-house and let the captain pass on the matter," said the sleuth.

Judson protested that it was an outrage to suspect him.

The whole party went to the station-house, and the case was laid before the captain.

"It's a case for the magistrate," he said, and ordered both Harry and Judson to be locked up.

As neither traveler had any acquaintance in town he could appeal to for bail, they seemed doomed to remain there all night.

The porter, however, who was dead sore on Judson, determined to secure the boy's release if he could.

He returned to the hotel, interview the proprietor, swore that Harry was innocent of the charge of theft, and was the victim of a put-up job on Judson's part, and asked his boss to get him out on bail.

The proprietor decided to do so, and an hour later Harry was free, but Judson experienced no such luck.

Next morning the case was brought before the magistrate.

After hearing all the testimony, he discharged Harry and held Judson for trial.

Thus the rascally drummer was hoist by his own petard, as the saying is.

CHAPTER X.

NUMBER THIRTEEN.

Harry was very well pleased with his success at Danville.

He was even better pleased to receive a letter from Elsie Carter when he returned from the police court to get his dinner.

The clerk handed it to him as he was passing toward the dining-room.

He read it at the table while waiting to be served.

The young lady acknowledged his first letter from Exeter, containing his account of his exploit in connection with the mail pouch thieves.

She complimented him on his conduct, and added that she was proud to number him among her most particular friends.

She said she hoped his trip would be successful in every way, and hinted that her father was particularly anxious to do something for him.

"I shall be delighted if you accept whatever offer my father makes to you when you get back here," she wrote. "I am sure you will find it greatly to your advantage. I would like you to take a position in his store, for then I could see you often, but, of course, if you prefer to continue on the road, it isn't for me to make any objection. In that event, my father will give you a route that should pay you finely."

After dinner Harry made calls on the retail trade and sold a considerable part of his own stock.

"I wish I could do as well in every town as I have done here," Harry said to himself. "I'd make money fast."

He visited several of the outlying villages, but they did not pan out well, so he was glad to pull up stakes and continue on.

Three weeks passed and Harry reached Clinton City, which was as far as he was going westward.

From there he was to work back to Chicago over another route.

When he registered at the Planter's Hotel he found a package from his firm.

It contained several enclosures.

First, a letter from the head of the firm, complimenting him on his showing up to that point.

Secondly, a letter bearing the express company's imprint, addressed to him in care of his firm in Chicago, and containing an official recognition for his services in recovering the express box at Exeter, together with a check for \$250.

Thirdly, an official letter from the post-office department at Washington, commanding his services in recovering most of the stolen money and securing the arrest of the thieves, and enclosing a check for \$500, payable to his order at one of the Government bank depositories in Chicago.

"That little adventure has paid me well, after all," Harry told himself, as he looked at the two checks. "I'll be able to start a bank account when I get back."

Clinton was the biggest place he had visited yet, and he hoped to do a first-rate business there.

He found, however, that a rival drummer had preceded him, and he did not do half as well as he expected during the two days' canvass he made for orders.

He was much disappointed.

When he started around among the small stores with his own stock he did very much better, but he realized there was more peddling to it than anything else.

However, as it turned him in a handsome profit, he had no kick coming.

Harry signalized his last night in town by going to a show.

The performance was a long one, and the curtain did not fall till nearly midnight.

When he came out on the street he started, as he thought, in the direction of his hotel, but found after a while that he had taken the wrong direction.

In trying to correct this, his unfamiliarity with the town got him more mixed up.

He was passing down a dark and silent short street one block in length, lined with substantial looking private houses, when the door of one of them opened and two men in evening dress came out.

They nearly ran into him, and Harry said, "I beg your pardon," in his usual polite way, and was continuing on when one of the men, hurrying after him, caught him by the arm and said:

"Are you in a great hurry to get home, young man?"

"Well, as it's after midnight, and I'm going to leave town by an early train in the morning, I think I ought to get back to my hotel as soon as possible. Being a stranger here—I'm a commercial traveler, and this is my first visit to Clinton—I've got mixed up, and if you would direct me right I'd consider it a favor."

"What hotel are you stopping at?"

"The Planter's."

"You are walking away from it. It is ten blocks over yonder. But I say, we would like you to do us a favor if you don't mind putting in an hour having a good time and a big feed."

"What is the favor?"

"Joining our dinner party."

"Why should I do that? In what way would that be a favor to you?"

"Well, the fact is we are members of the Thirteen Club."

"The Thirteen Club!"

"Exactly. Quite an exclusive organization, I assure you. We give a dinner on the 13th of each month. This is the 13th of this month, and the dinner is all ready to be served, but, unfortunately, a difficulty has presented itself that has upset all our arrangements."

"What is the difficulty?"

"One of our number was taken suddenly ill on his way to the club and had to be taken home. That leaves us a party of only twelve, and to sit down to our regular banquet one member short of the magical number would not only spoil all precedent, but would doubtless lead to the disruption of our organization."

"And how can I help you out?"

"By joining us—becoming No. 13, in fact. You are not superstitious, are you? We aim to hit the old superstition that 13 is an unlucky number in the solar plexis. We have been organized exactly one year, lacking perhaps half an hour, and this is our twelfth dinner. The superstition says that if thirteen people sit down at table together one of them will surely die within the year. Nothing like that has occurred so far. In thirty minutes the year will have elapsed, and we will have demonstrated the folly of putting faith in that popular superstition, besides driving a nail into a few others that we have arranged to do up. As it will be practically impossible for us to secure the thirteenth man we stand so greatly in need of unless you will accommodate us by your presence, we trust you will not refuse to honor us with your society," said the man.

Harry hesitated.

He would not admit that he was superstitious with respect to the number 13.

We are not prepared to affirm or deny the fact.

As he was their only hope, the two men seized him, one by each arm, and urged him toward the house from which they had come.

If the Thirteen Club was about to hold one of its monthly dinners there, no evidence of the fact was apparent on the outside.

The building was as dark and somber looking at that hour as all the other houses in the block.

Before Harry realized it he was being led up the short flight of steps that connected with the front door.

Having accompanied the well-dressed men that far, he had tacitly accepted their invitation to become No. 13 for this occasion, and he felt that it would look bad for him to balk now.

A pass-key admitted them into a dark hall, and the door closed behind them.

The party proceeded down the hall in deep darkness.

Then a door was pushed open and the sudden transition to a brightly lighted room quite dazzled the young traveler.

He shut his eyes and stopped short.

"Ah, you have secured No. 13," said a deep-toned voice.

"We have, and he seems to have no special reverence for the number, as he offered no opposition to coming with us," said one of Harry's companions.

"Gentlemen," said the deep-toned voice, "we will do No. 13 the honor of placing him at the head of the table in recognition of the service he is doing us. Is there any objection?"

"None," came in chorus from a number of voices.

Then Harry opened his eyes and found himself in a large room in the center of which was a table laid out with silver, cut-glass and flowers, with the other things necessary to a well-appointed dinner party.

The men in full dress were standing in small knots about the apartment.

Harry and his conductors made up the required thirteen.

The boy was led to the head of the table and the others took their places standing.

"Gentlemen," said Harry, "this is an unexpected surprise to me. As I appear to be a necessary guest, you will have to excuse my lack of proper attire. It isn't my fault that I appear before you in a garb different from your own."

"Say no more, young man, no excuse is required under the circumstances," said the deep-toned voice. "Gentlemen, be seated. It lacks but five minutes of the time that completes our first year. Not one of our number has died, and so we may congratulate ourselves on having downed one very foolish bugaboo."

As the last word escaped his lips and the servants entered with the first course—the soup—a loud ring came at the bell.

"Who can that be?" said the man with the deep-toned voice, who appeared to be the guiding spirit of the club.

A servant entered with a salver and presented him with a note.

He took it, but as he read it his face changed color.

"Is this a message from our absent and temporarily afflicted brother?" said one of the club members who sat opposite.

"It is nothing, nothing that need interfere with our dinner," said the gentleman, putting the note in his vest pocket.

As he sat down he glanced at the clock and saw that it was just one.

The year had expired, but the superstition had done its work, for the note had conveyed word that the member who was taken ill on his way to the club had died on the stroke of midnight.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DINNER.

We will not dwell on the feast that Harry participated in.

It was a sumptuous one, but the young traveler had sense enough to eat sparingly of the different courses, for he was not accustomed to such a grand lay-out, nor to eat at such a late hour.

Each course was attended with a different kind of wine, which Harry refused, and no notice was taken of his refusal.

He was practically the guest of honor, and as he behaved with the easy grace of a gentleman, his right to pass up the wine, and any course he did not care to partake of, was conceded.

Finally, as the clock pointed at two, the last course, the dessert, in various sections, was brought on, and with it champagne was opened in unlimited quantity.

Toasts were in order, and the gentleman with the deep-toned voice was expected, as master of ceremonies, to lead off.

He rose.

The others followed suit, and Harry got up, too.

"The Thirteen Club," said the toastmaster.

"The Thirteen Club," cried everybody, except Harry, and the toast was drunk.

Another gentleman got up in a few minutes at a nod from the leader.

"Our guest," he said.

The twelve gentlemen bowed at the young traveler and drank to him.

Harry felt that it was up to him to respond.

He did not know what to say, so said the first thing that occurred to him.

"May you all live long and prosper, including the gentleman whose place I have filled on this auspicious occasion."

All drank except the gentleman with the deep-toned voice.

He merely touched his lips to his glass and looked very solemn.

Thirteen toasts altogether—one from each man present—were drunk, and during the proceedings cigars were passed around and lighted.

Harry accepted a cigar each time the box of expensive perfectos came his way, but the weeds went into his pocket, and no one took any notice of the fact that he alone of all present did not smoke.

Half-past two came and Harry hoped the party would soon break up, though there appeared to be no indication of it at that moment.

He would have been glad to have taken his departure, but he did not like to make any suggestion to that effect, for he had been well treated, though he was a stranger to all present, as they were to him.

Apparently they represented the top rung of Clinton society, and it would be many a day, if ever, before he again had the honor of associating on terms of intimacy and equality with the leading citizens of a city.

He felt it was an honor, though an accidental and peculiar one.

So another half hour went by and three o'clock came.

The gentleman with the deep-toned voice rose and rapped for order.

The buzz of conversation died away and all eyes were fixed on the master of ceremonies.

"Gentlemen, as this may be the last meeting and dinner of the Thirteen Club——"

"The last!" cried the man, opposite, in surprise, which was shared by all the others except Harry.

"That is for you to say, gentlemen," said the speaker, solemnly. "As this may be the flus of the Thirteen Club, I think it is fitting that we each individually present to our young guest of the evening some small token of remembrance of the occasion. I think it would be a grateful act on our part in return for the young gentleman's acquiescence in coming here to oblige us."

"I second the motion," said the man opposite.

"Very good. Young man, we have not asked you your name, nor have we attempted to pry into your identity in any way. Now that we are about to break up for the evening we would be pleased to know your name."

"My name, gentlemen, is Harry Green. I am a commercial traveler from Chicago in the employ of Hatch & Co. Clinton is the limit of my route westward, and to-morrow, or rather to-day, for it is some time past midnight, I intend to work back to the Windy City over a different route. I wish to express my thanks to you for the honor you have conferred upon me this evening by admitting so humble a person as myself on terms of equality with yourselves. The privilege is one I shall long remember, and the city of Clinton will represent a red letter in my calendar."

Harry sat down amid a clapping of hands and approving nods and looks.

"Mr. Green," said the deep-toned gentleman, "I think I voice the sentiments of my fellow club members when I say that the honor is not all one-sided. You will pardon us if we elect to remain nameless. When we meet as the Thirteen Club we are known only to each other by the numbers we drew by lot at our first meeting. I am Number One, and I beg you to accept this diamond watch charm as my personal memento of the occasion."

The gentleman detached the charm from his watch-chain and passed it to Harry.

"Thank you, sir. I shall keep it as long as I live in remembrance of this dinner."

The gentleman nodded in a cultured way and then looked at another gentleman.

"I am Number Two, Mr. Green, and I present you with this silver-embossed card-case," said the man, removing the cards.

Number Three handed Harry a small gold-tipped pencil ornament.

The others followed in turn, turning over various articles, every one different in kind.

Harry laid them on the table in front of him in the order in which he received them.

Number Twelve's offering was a diamond shirt stud.

Then the deep-toned gentleman rose once more.

"Number Thirteen is absent," he said, solemnly. "I think he would wish to add a memento to the others. This piece of paper, which I received as we began our dinner, came from him. It bears three words in his handwriting—his last words, Gentlemen, 'Good-by boys—Thirteen,' and a communication from his son stating that he died on the stroke of twelve—within the year."

The announcement created a tremendous sensation in the room.

Then a deep and solemn silence fell, broken only by the words of the deep-toned man who said:

"Mr. Green, I hand you this paper. Keep it in connection with the other mementoes as the offering of Number Thirteen—the gentleman whose place you have filled so acceptably to all present."

Harry took the paper mechanically and laid it down at the end of the row.

He remained standing when the master of the ceremonies sat down.

To say the truth, he was quite staggered by the revelation.

He stood there as the representative of the dead man—Number Thirteen—who was as much a stranger to him as the other twelve.

Whether he was superstitious or not, the fact remained that the hoodoo had won out—one of the members of the Thirteen Club had died within the year, and as luck would have it, the unseen mantle of the corpse had fallen on him.

Was it an evil portent for him?

It was impossible to say that fateful moment.

The silence and gloom that enveloped the room like a pall oppressed him.

The lights were none the less brilliant, however, and sparkled upon the glass and silverware just as when he was ushered into the room.

Something impelled him to speak, though words seemed out of place then.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a tone that vibrated on the air, "I ask you to rise."

Every man got up simultaneously, but none looked at him.

"I ask you to drink to the memory of Number Thirteen. May he rest in peace."

"Amen!" came in solemn chorus from all present, as they touched their lips to their glasses.

The spell was broken.

"I move, gentlemen, that we adjourn, sine die," said Number One.

No one seconded the motion, but all bowed in token of acquiescence.

Harry took out his memorandum book and wrote down the numbers, one to thirteen, on the last page.

Opposite each number he noted the memento of the giver.

He placed all of the articles in his handkerchief and put it in his pocket.

"Mr. Green," said Number One, "I will escort you to your hotel."

"Thank you, sir. It is a favor I will appreciate," replied the young traveler.

He shook hands with each of the other gentlemen, and then all left the house together.

Every one knew that the Thirteen Club had passed out of existence.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

Harry bade Number One good-night at the entrance to the Planter's Hotel.

The gentleman had taken a great fancy to the young traveler, and introduced himself as Robert Wilson, head of the house of Wilson, Davis & Co., Dry Goods.

Should you come to Clinton again I should be glad to have you call at our store and see me," he said.

"I will do so with pleasure if the opportunity presents itself," replied Harry.

Then they parted and the boy sought his room to get a few hours' sleep, leaving a call with the night clerk for seven o'clock.

At half-past eight Harry was on his way.

His destination was Nayland, twenty odd miles north.

He got there a little before nine, registered, and started out to do business.

It was a large manufacturing town, and a live place.

He got one order, and that was not a large one.

He sold a lot of the auction goods at the small stores, however, so that on the whole he could not complain.

From this town he wrote Elsie a full account of his dinner with the Thirteen Club of Clinton and its gruesome finish.

A week passed and his own stock, which he carried in his trunk, was reduced to small proportions.

He would soon have to cut out all side trips and give his attention wholly to his regular route.

Harry, having finished Decatur, hired a horse and started for Ridgefield, five miles away.

It was a small place, but he had been told that his line of auction goods was likely to sell there.

It took him less than an hour to go there.

In two hours he had visited the few stores that dealt in such things as he had to offer and made a few dollars profit.

Then he started back, expecting to reach his hotel in Decatur in time for supper, after which he intended to go on to his next stand.

It was a sultry day, and before he had gone far he saw a thunder storm coming up fast.

Satisfied it would catch him before he could reach town, he looked around for shelter.

He saw a distant farm-house on his left, but nothing on his right.

He spurred on his perspiring animal.

A turn of the road brought him in sight of a large house off the road to the right, access to which was to be had up a long lane.

He remembered noticing this house on his way to Ridgefield.

It then struck him that the house had a deserted look.

There was no sign of life about it.

Still, as it was a third of a mile from the road, he could not be positive about the fact.

As the storm was coming up hot foot, this house was the nearest port in a storm.

When he came to the lane he dismounted, opened the gate with some difficulty, led the horse in, shut the gate and rode slowly up to the house.

The closer he drew to it the more deserted it appeared to be.

He rode around to the back through the ruins of a garden which had gone to seed and was overrun with weeds and rank grass.

The yard was also in a wild state of neglect, the grass all of two feet high.

The shutters were closed on the lower front windows, and the same was the case on the sides and back.

That settled any doubt in the boy's mind about the house having tenants.

It was clearly deserted, and Harry wondered at that, for it was a good house, in an excellent state of preservation, and needed but a coat or two of paint and a few repairs to make it look real chipper.

The clearing-up of the yard and garden was a minor matter easy of accomplishment.

There was a front porch which offered partial shelter from the storm that was coming up, and a back porch that offered less.

Harry dismounted and tried what he judged was the kitchen door, and found it, as he expected, fast.

Evidently he was shut out from the house.

There was a barn and other outhouses, and a closer inspection of the former disclosed the satisfactory fact that the big door was shut, but not secured.

Harry opened the door and led his horse into the deserted building.

Hardly had he passed the entrance when a flash of lurid light ran athwart the darkening sky, and a peal of thunder roared out like the first gun of a coming battle.

"I didn't get under shelter any too soon," he said metaphorically shaking hands with himself. "I'm all right here, and so is the horse. The storm will blow over in half an hour or less, and then I can proceed on my way."

The light breeze which had started up about the time Harry left the village had died away and left the atmosphere stagnant.

There was wind enough up where the oncoming clouds were, and the landscape was certain to catch a taste of it presently.

The thunder and lightning was now pretty frequent, but at a distance yet, only that one bright flash and crash had awakened the countryside to what was approaching.

The air grew still darker as the black, menacing clouds overshadowed the sky.

Harry stood at the open door facing the house.

The storm was coming obliquely from that direction.

Suddenly he heard a moaning sound at a distance.

He knew it must be the wind traveling at racehorse speed. Down in the road he saw a cloud of dust rise, and then a heavy gust swept across the property, shaking the trees as a terrier might a rat.

All was quiet again, while the lightning blazed brighter in red, zigzag fashion, and the thunder growled louder.

Another heavy gust, a shorter period of calm, and then the wind came in earnest.

The raindrops began to fall.

A crash of thunder sent them down faster, and presently the downpour swept in sheets across the landscape.

Harry was forced to close the door, for the rain and wind beat against it.

Having nothing to do, Harry struck a match and looked around the barn, for it was only slightly lit up by the lightning through the cracks.

Outside of himself and the horse, there was nothing but dust and a small amount of debris in it.

A wide stairway led up to the loft.

Harry ascended and found it bare with the exception of a little hay in one corner near a hole in the flooring.

There were four windows—two in the front and two in the rear—all of them tightly closed by shutters.

The rain beat down on the roof like the continuous rattle of musketry, while the wind roared all around the building.

Harry peered out through a wet knothole that looked toward the house.

At that moment a brilliant flash of lightning showed up objects as clear as sunlight.

For an instant he seemed to see every board in the house.

To his amazement he distinctly saw a wild and haggard-looking face at one of the windows.

The next moment house and landscape were lost in the darkness and sweeping rain.

"There's some one in the house after all," breathed the young traveler. "A man, and a hard-looking one at that. Such a face one might expect to see in a bughouse, or in a convict settlement where the prisoners were treated like dogs. Heavens, I wonder who the person is!"

Harry kept his eye at the knothole, waiting for the next flash.

It came in a moment or two, but the face at the window was gone.

The storm kept on at its wildest pitch—the lightning flashed luridly, but Harry failed to catch another view of that desperate looking face.

Finally he gave it up and went downstairs, where he found his horse restive under the roar of the storm.

He spoke to him soothingly and petted him, and the animal calmed down.

The storm gradually worked off, but like many thunderstorms, it held back one tremendous crash for the very last.

It appeared to be almost over, and Harry opened the barn door to let in the wind, now reduced to a breeze of refreshing coolness, when, with a suddenness and unexpectedness that dazed the boy, the heavens seemed to split asunder, and simultaneous with the flash that enveloped the house in a blaze of fire came a stunning crash that deafened the young traveler.

Part of the building in full view of the boy crumbled away as if by magic under the force of the thunderbolt.

A cloud of pulverized mortar and brick from the wreck of the big chimney rose like steam and was wafted away.

The clapboards were torn and wrenched from that spot, some falling on the ground with the brick, others hanging in fantastic shape in the air.

Across the jagged opening hung a human figure in shirt sleeves and pants.

It lay there motionless, like a fallen effigy.

"It must be the man I saw at the window, and he's probably dead—killed outright by that awful bolt," said Harry.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

Harry rushed toward the house.

The sky had already lightened up considerably, and was growing lighter every moment.

When the young traveler reached the jagged hole in the house he saw something bright in the wreckage.

Stooping, he pulled it out and discovered it to be a tin box such as householders and office people keep valuable papers in.

Laying the box aside, Harry crawled into the ground floor room over the wreck of the brick chimney.

An open door in the vacant room let him out into the main hall where the front stairs were.

Up the stairs he ran and, reaching the landing, found his way into the room where the figure lay by the jagged opening once occupied by the upper part of the chimney.

One look at the hard looking, gaunt face, with three weeks' growth of reddish beard adding to its uncouthness, told Harry that it was the face he had seen at the window, and that the man was stone dead.

His shirt was ripped open to the waist, and one trouser leg cut as clean as if by a sharp knife, and the shoe on that foot was torn to pieces.

A blue mark ran down his chest, marking the course of the lightning.

"He looks like a tramp who had taken refuge in the building," thought the boy. "Well, he has met his fate here. It is a case for the coroner of the county, and I had better not disturb him."

As it might be some hours before the coroner viewed him, Harry, knowing that dead bodies stiffen rapidly, composed the man's limbs, bound up his falling jaw with a piece from his shirt, and, closing each eye, placed a small piece of brick on them.

He then took a rapid survey of the upper part of the house and found it completely bereft of furniture.

The lower part was in the same condition.

Only the stove remained in the kitchen.

"It is lucky no one else was in the house. Had I taken refuge from the storm in it there is no telling how I would have come out between the man and the thunderbolt. I don't like the look on the man's face, and I wouldn't have fancied him as a companion," said Harry as he crawled out of the building.

Then he thought of the tin box and picked it up.

"Seems funny this box should have been in this vacant house," he said.

It was not heavy, and when he shook it he felt something light inside.

"There are papers in this box. I don't believe the box belonged to the dead man. Maybe the owner or one of his family placed it in the chimney for safe keeping, and in the hurry of moving overlooked it. I'll take it to town and see if I can find a claimant for it."

Harry mounted his horse and reached the town without further adventure.

He took the tin box to his room and left it there, then he went to supper.

After supper he went to the station-house and notified the authorities that a man, struck by a lightning bolt, lay dead in the big vacant house on the road to Ridgefield.

He explained the circumstances under which he had made the gruesome discovery.

"That's the Risdon Homestead," said the officer. "It's tied up in court. Old Risdon made a will leaving the property to his second wife, a young woman, but the document could not be found at the time of his death, though the old man's lawyer, who represents her interests, declared he had drawn it up, and that it was witnessed in proper form. The witnesses testified to the same effect. The old man has a good-for-nothing son, by his first wife, whom he practically disinherited. This man is fighting for his legal share of the property on the ground that his father died intestate. He will undoubtedly win unless the will turns up. The wife fears that a servant, working in the son's interest, found the will and gave it to him, in which case he, of course, has destroyed it. All these facts in detail were printed in the morning papers a few weeks ago."

"What kind of looking man is this son?" asked Harry, with a suspicion in his mind.

"A sandy-featured chap of average height and build."

"Your description fits the corpse now lying in the house," said the boy.

"The dickens you say!" ejaculated the officer. "What was he doing there?"

"Don't ask me, for I couldn't tell you. Perhaps he was hunting for the will," said Harry, thinking of the tin box.

"That's so," said the officer. "Well, his death won't alter the situation much, for he has a wife and family, and they will succeed to his rights."

"Under the law, as the case stands, how much is the widow entitled to?"

"Her dowry rights only, I believe, though I don't know for certain."

"Do you know who her lawyer is? I should like to call on him."

"I don't recall his name. You can find it out, with his address, at the office of one of the two morning papers. He has offered a reward of \$2,000 for the will, which I believe has been increased since."

"All right. Notify the coroner to take charge of the dead man, whoever he is."

"I will. By the way, I want your name and address."

"Harry Green, commercial traveler, Decatur House."

The officer wrote it down, and Harry left the station-house. He went to the office of the Decatur Tribune, a few doors away, and made his way to the editorial room.

There he got the information he wanted.

The lawyer's name was John Hall, and his office was at No. 150 Washington street, the main street of the town.

Harry also learned that the reward had been increased to \$5,000, because the judge was expected to hand down his decision soon, and the lawyer knew it would be against his client.

He was, therefore, making a strenuous effort to either bring the will to light, or secure information that would show it was deliberately destroyed by the person most interested in keeping it out of sight.

The morning papers contained an account of the partial destruction of the Risdon Homestead by a thunderbolt, and the death through the same agency of the son of old man Risdon, the contestant for his property.

Not a word appeared about the tin box.

Harry had been interviewed by a reporter from each of the papers at the hotel the evening before, and he told his story frankly, omitting all reference to the tin box he had found.

His name, of course, appeared in the newspaper stories as the eyewitness of the tragedy.

About ten o'clock Harry appeared at the lawyer's office with the tin box.

He was admitted to the private room.

"I presume, sir, you have read what the papers printed this morning about the Risdon Homestead?" said Harry, after introducing himself.

"I have," nodded the lawyer, eyeing him curiously.

"I am the party who is mentioned in the papers in connection with the matter. I furnished the details to the reporters, and notified the police of the man's death."

"Ah, indeed."

"I held back one important fact."

"What is that?"

"Something that may prove of interest to you and your client, the widow, of the late owner."

"Ha! Has it something to do with the missing will?" said the lawyer, with fresh and eager interest.

"I think it has."

"Let me know at once. I have offered a reward of \$5,000 for the discovery of the will or information in connection with it. Perhaps you may win it."

"I hope so. I found this tin box in the wreck of the chimney," and Harry laid the box on the lawyer's desk.

He pounced upon it with avidity.

"This is the missing box in which the old man kept his private papers. I have no doubt I shall find the will in it. If I do I will pay you the reward."

A locksmith was sent for, and while waiting for him to come with his tools, Harry told how he found the box, together with much not recorded by the papers bearing indirectly on the issue at hand.

The locksmith came, opened the box, and the will was found in it, together with other important documents, such as the insurance policy on the homestead, and the policy for \$3,000 on old Risdon's life.

When Harry left the office he carried the lawyer's check for \$5,000, payable to his order.

The recovery of the will and the other papers were duly chronicled in the afternoon papers, and Harry again appeared in the limelight in connection therewith.

The morning paper reporters, on reading these fresh facts, were much disgruntled with Harry for keeping the information back, so that the afternoon papers got the full benefit of the news.

Harry collected the money, bought a draft on Chicago with it, and put the draft in his trunk with the two checks from the express company and the Government, which he would collect when he reached the Windy City.

This affair ended Harry's adventures on that trip, and two weeks later he got off the train in Chicago and went to the boarding-house he had lived at before going on the road for Hatch & Co.

His first duty was to report to his firm; his next to call on Mr. Carter at his store, where he received a cordial welcome.

Before he left the presence of that gentleman he had made a very satisfactory business arrangement with him to go on the road for the house in the fall.

That evening he called at the Carter home, on Prairie avenue, to see Elsie, who gave him a rousing reception.

He met her mother for the first time, and received that lady's grateful thanks for the services he had rendered her daughter.

He and Elsie spent a great evening together, and when he left it was after promising to call on her at least once a week until he went on the road for her father.

Next day Harry distributed \$6,000 among the best Chicago savings banks, and felt quite rich for a boy who a few months since had left Chicago on his first trip as a drummer with all his surplus cash invested in cheap auction goods bought of the firm he had signed with to take orders.

During the few weeks he remained in Chicago he spent a great deal of his time in Elsie's company, not only visiting her, but taking her around to one amusement resort or another.

Her parents offered no objection to the growing intimacy between Elsie and Harry, though the boy was not in the same social swim.

Mr. Carter saw that he possessed the elements that make a successful man, and he was confident the boy would rise to the top of the ladder in time.

When the time came, Harry started out for the Carter firm as one of their travelers, and he proved a great success in taking orders.

We have not the space to follow his career, as experience broadened his abilities in his chosen calling, but we will simply say that he merited the excellent opinion Mr. Carter had formed of him, and in due time was accepted as the favored suitor for his daughter's hand.

After his marriage to Elsie he was admitted to the firm as junior partner, but he still went on the road, taking his wife with him.

They proved a very congenial couple, and the only fault Elsie ever had to find with him was that perhaps he was too full of business.

Next week's issue will contain "BAFFLING THE BROKERS; OR, THE BOY WITH THE IRON NERVE." (A Wall Street Story.)

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

A. J. Dudeck, of Petoskey, Mich., has received a post-card dated June 11, 1913, announcing that a message which he tossed overboard July 7, 1909, while on the steamer President Lincoln one day out from New York, has been found on the south coast of the Isle of Anglesey, North Wales, England.

Clarence Bowman, of Vandergrift, Pa., has established a record by trapping 39 rats in one night. Procuring an iron tub, he placed it in one of their favorite haunts and partly filled it with bran, liberally feeding the rats for a few days. Then he half filled the tub with water and scattered a liberal layer of bran over this. The next morning he found the tub black with drowned rats.

Invading the cradle of the one-year-old son of John E. Copenhavor, near York, Pa., a two-foot garter snake bit the child on the neck and then closed its jaws on the nipple of the baby's nursing bottle. Peering into the cradle to see what was making the baby cry, a six-year-old brother discovered the snake, which at once ended its greedy meal and darted under a cupboard. The father was called and killed the reptile.

The honey bees near Fostoria, O., have contracted the opium habit. Like the Chinese, they get theirs from the poppy, as many residents of Fostoria grow the Oriental flowers. The bees have found this out and of late they have been leaving acres of clover blossoms to hunt out the poppy beds. They work very vigorously for an hour or so and then fall to the ground apparently as stupefied as the Chinese opium smokers after "hitting the pipe."

Only about 30,000 acres of national forest land have been burned over so far this season, according to reports to the forest service. This area is an infinitesimal proportion of the total acreage contained in the 163 forests under Federal supervision. The record encourages the hope that the fire loss this year will be small. Conditions everywhere except in the Southwest, it is said, are more than ordinarily favorable. Four fires are burning on the Coconino forest, Arizona, and during the past two weeks there have been fifty-eight fires on the national forests in Arizona and New Mexico.

The charred wreckage of an aeroplane, with the incinerated bodies of two aviators lying in the ashes, was found recently near Nonancourt, on the railroad from Paris to Granville. The dead aviators were identified as a man named Percin, who was experimenting with a new monoplane of his own invention, and his son, who had accompanied him as mechanic. Their aeroplane capsized at a height of 150 feet. It fell with a crash to the ground and the violence of the impact caused the fuel tank to explode. The aviators were pinned beneath the motor, and, being unable to extricate themselves, were burned to death.

The Navy Department has received through the Department of State a silver loving cup, which the Japanese Government desires to present to the U. S. S. Charleston. It appears that during August, 1910, there was a flood in the City of Tokio, Japan, which caused suffering and hardship among the people. The U. S. S. Charleston, in company with the U. S. S. Saratoga and U. S. S. New Orleans, was in the vicinity of Tokio at the time of the flood in that city, and the officers and men raised a fund, which was sent ashore for the relief of the sufferers. The incident had been forgotten until the receipt of correspondence from the State Department, together with the cup, in which it was stated that the Japanese Government desired to present to the Charleston the silver cup. The cup is now on its way to the Charleston, which is on our Pacific Coast, where it will be placed on exhibition and properly cared for.

One of the humblest home in Hillsdale, Mich., was made the happiest in the whole country lately when Mrs. Mary J. Welsh, who has been blind for fifty years, recovered her sight. When she was a girl of sixteen her eyes failed until she became entirely blind. In that condition she married and is the mother of eight children whom she never saw until to-day. To make her burden doubly hard, her husband became ill and she was forced to take in washing to support the family. She struggled on until her children were able to earn some money for themselves. Then things became a bit easier for her, but her sightless eyes still ached for a sight of the children. Several operations were tried and were unsuccessful. The sons, now grown up, brought the mother to Chicago, where she was taken to a hospital for treatment. Surgeons examined her and found she was suffering from a double cataract. She was discharged from the hospital, and two sons and a daughter greeted her. She was taken home to Hillsdale, where the entire family welcomed her.

Seeing that the life of Frank Hanna, a boy, of Sharon, Pa., was in danger, as he was being dragged along the road in a runaway, Frances Heanly sent her horse galloping in pursuit of the maddened horse and as she reached its side leaped on its back and brought it to a standstill. Young Hanna was not badly hurt. Hanna was driving home in a buggy when his horse ran away. In endeavoring to stop the animal he became entangled in the reins and fell from the buggy. His horse started on another spurt and the lad was being dragged along the rough road when his predicament was discovered by Miss Heanly, who was horseback riding along the road. The young woman gave pursuit and within 100 yards overtook the runaway. Steadying herself in her saddle, she leaped to the back of the runaway and after stopping him turned her attention to the boy. The buggy was not broken and she drove the boy home. The father of the lad offered the girl a reward, but she refused.

HAND IN HAND

—OR—

THE LUCKY LEGION

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XI. (Continued).

Smith composed himself and drew down the corners of his thin-lipped mouth in a sanctimonious way.

"Hiram, I'm sorry that you and I should have quarreled in our old age. It is a pity, for both of us are near the end of life's hard race."

Fairview's magnate looked at Smith for some moments in amazement. Not for a moment, however, was he deceived by this ebullition of sentiment, which he took at its real value.

"I feel that I can afford to make the first overtures toward renewing our friendship," continued Smith, "inasmuch as I have the point of vantage over you financially at the present time. Hiram, I think you and I ought to be friends."

There was a pause. Then French said, urbanely:

"As you have a point of vantage over me financially it would hardly be policy for me to slight your offer of friendship. I suppose that is what you are driving at?"

"Well, well," stuttered Smith, "I—that is—perhaps I am a little too practical. You see, I am a hard business man, and often look at friendship, perhaps, from a business basis—"

"To be bought and sold as a commodity in the market," said French. "I understand you, Smith. You are here to sell me your friendship. Not that I will purchase, but as a matter of curiosity, what is your price?"

Smith looked hard at the other. It is possible that he misconstrued the mill owner's meaning, and fancied that he had really struck the keynote. He was apt to judge others by his own mercenary self. A sufficient sum would always purchase what he owned, even to a matter of honor.

"Ah!" he reflected. "I have him pinched. He will come to terms. I will put it to him direct."

So he blurted out, confidently:

"French, we can affiliate upon one condition, and that is that you will give the hand of your daughter Myrtle in marriage to my son James."

CHAPTER XII.

AN ULTIMATUM

For one moment the silence of the tomb reigned in that private office. Mr. French sat like a statue, glaring at Smith with apoplectic fury. He trembled with fearful excitement.

But the next moment he had control of himself. He did not even deign to reply to Smith's infamous proposition.

But his right hand rose and fell upon the button of a bell. As the note rang out sharp and clear Roger entered. "kindly show this man the door. Do not admit him here again."

Smith was so astounded that he could hardly grasp the situation. He looked from French to Benton, and a murderous light came into his eyes.

"Did you hear my proposition aright, French?" he asked.

Mr. French had turned his back. Roger held the door open. Smith hesitated. He looked at Roger and then back to French. Then all the hatred of his soul burst forth.

"By the fiends," he cried, savagely, "you shall come to terms, Hiram French. I will humble you to the dust. You shall beg at my knees. I shall not offer you my friendship again. Henceforth it is hatred—and war to the death!"

Roger unceremoniously bundled the old skinflint out of the office and went back to his desk. After a while Mr. French came out. He was pale and haggard.

He donned his hat and coat and went out, saying as he did so:

"I shall not return again to-day, Roger. You will close the office and the safe at four o'clock."

"All right, sir," replied Roger.

At four o'clock Roger closed the safe, and locking up the office, started for home. The autumn days were getting short, and the sun was well down as he strolled up the main street of the town.

The Fairview Bank, of which Smith was president, was on this street, and Roger saw Smith coming down the steps. The old banker stepped into a carriage and was driven away.

Roger took a casual note of the fact, little dreaming that it was afterward to prove of value. An alley extended along one side of the bank.

And as Smith rolled away in his carriage Roger saw two slender figures glide out of this alley and gaze after the carriage. In a moment they slid back into the gloom of the alley.

He recognized the two skulkers at once. One was James Smith and the other was his pal, Ike Shaw.

For a moment he was tempted to follow them and see

what their game was, for he felt sure they were up to something. But on second thought he decided not to do so, and went home.

When Smith and Shaw slunk into the alley they had noted Roger, and pausing in the shadows Smith gazed after him, saying:

"Did you see him looking at us, Ike? You don't suppose he is on to us, do you?"

Shaw's keen eyes glittered.

"It won't be well for him to shadow us!" he declared. "I've a score to settle with him myself. But he is going along. It is all right."

Smith drew a breath of relief.

"I'm glad of that," he said. "Somehow he always has the luck of winning, and he might spoil our plans. You brought along the kit all right?"

"Everything is hid in that coal shed yonder. You have found out the combination?"

"I always knew it like a printed book, but the governor don't suspect that I do. Oh, I tell you, Ikey, there's a great future before us. Gay Paree and the Riviera."

"Monte Carlo is my Mecca."

"We'll round up there like howling swells. What's the use of wasting our lives in such a cow pasture as Fairview? After all, I shall only be claiming what belongs to me. Money—money is what we want."

"You bet!" declared Shaw, biting a big hunk out of a plug of tobacco. "But we don't want to be seen around here too much. If everything is all ready why not keep dark? I'll be here at twelve-thirty."

"All right. I'll go home and have one more try at the governor. If he don't settle with me then the game is on."

"So long!"

The two rogues separated. Smith struck out for home. He entered the house and called for his supper. He inquired for his father, and learned that he was in the library.

A short while later James entered the library unceremoniously and accosted his father.

"Dad," he said, "I want to talk business with you."

The banker's thin lips compressed.

"What have you to say?" he asked, tersely.

"I am your son, ain't I?"

"Well?" replied the banker, coldly.

"But you see fit to give me the treatment of a dog. I have no allowance, and I can no longer keep my end up with the boys. I am losing standing everywhere."

"For which you alone are responsible."

"I disclaim that. You are the instrument in depriving me of that prime requisite to social standing—money."

"Well, don't you think you deserve punishment?"

"It is a punishment which reflects upon you as well as me. Moreover, it is driving me to desperation—and the dogs!"

Egbert Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"You brought it all upon yourself," he said. "I had a bright career mapped out for you, but you thwarted my plans."

"Well, what of it?" snapped James. "Are you going to treat me as your son, and give me the allowance legally my due? I want to know, once for all."

"Not at present," replied the banker, coldly.

James Smit's face lit up with an evil passion. He trembled with suppressed wrath and hatred. For it was true that he bore his father no love.

"You are an unnatural parent!" he hissed. "And I can tell you that you will be sorry for this treatment of me. May my acts now rest upon your head. You are responsible for what may happen in the future, for you have driven me to it. I shall always hate you, though you are my father!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BANK ROBBERY.

If Egbert Smith had read any significance in the parting words of his profligate son, he might have averted that which followed. But he did not for a moment dream of any ulterior purpose.

He smiled sardonically after James had gone.

"Ah!" he muttered, with self-satisfaction. "He is really beginning to feel the structure. The punishment is effectual. I will humble him before I am through with him."

James went to his room, but not to sleep. He opened a box of cigars and tapped a bottle of wine. Alternately smoking and drinking, he paced the floor until the clock struck the midnight hour.

Then he picked up a small gripsack, which he had packed.

"The time has come!" he muttered. "The game is on!"

He opened the door silently and stole noiselessly down to the front entrance. Slipping the bolt back, he went out into the open air.

The street was silent and deserted. James listened a while, and then stole carefully away in the shadows. In a short time he reached the alley by the bank.

A low whistle came from the darkness, and he knew that Shaw was waiting for him.

In a moment he saw a dark form in the shadow of the alley.

"Well," whispered Ike, "you are behind time, as usual. I've been here all of fifteen minutes."

"Well, I'm here," retorted Smith. "Is the coast clear?"

"Yes. The night watchman is sound asleep, thanks to the drug in his coffee."

It seemed that Shaw had been able to drug the coffee of the watchman, who always took his lunch about eleven o'clock in the bank. The servant girl at Jennings', the watchman's home, was an old flame of Shaw's, and had easily been persuaded to do the trick for him.

By looking through a rear window Jennings could be seen sound asleep in his chair. The town policeman had already passed along, so that the coast was clear for the daring young bank robbers.

(To be continued)

FACTS WORTH READING

The United States Treasury handled in actual cash during the last fiscal year \$7,071,520,000, breaking all previous records, and exceeding the transactions of the previous year by \$469,769,000 and those of three years ago by \$1,478,826,000. Including bonds, checks and warrants the Treasury handled over \$10,000,000,000 during the year. This amount, which does not include the transactions of the sub-treasuries, was handled without the loss of a cent. The receiving teller of the Government took in over the counter \$75,353,000 during the year; the paying teller cashed \$118,177,000 in checks and warrants; the shipping teller sent out \$884,518,000, and the "change teller" made "small change" for more than \$50,000,000.

RESULTS OF THE MAWSON EXPEDITION.

The experiences and achievement of Mr. Frank Wild and his seven companions, who formed the second base of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, have just been made public. After leaving Mawson and the main party at Adelie Land, the second detachment sailed westward along the Antarctic coast, under orders to form a base on Sabrina Land or Knox Land. The former land was found not to exist, and ice prevented access to Knox Land. Finally the party was landed, with its stores, on a lofty moving glacier, which Wild thinks was mistaken by Wilkes for "Termination Land. It was named "Shackleton Glacier." From this base surveys were made all along the coast from 101 degrees east longitude, on the east, to the point reached by the German expedition of 1902 on the west, besides penetrating inward—in one place 50 miles. The main result of these explorations was the discovery of a tract of land having 350 miles of coast, and probably extending south to the pole, which the explorers named "Queen Mary's Land." On an island 65 miles west of the expedition's base was discovered the largest rookery of Emperor penguins heretofore recorded. Some 7,000 young Emperor birds were found here, besides innumerable ordinary penguins. The Mawson expedition as a whole may be said to have resulted in the accurate delineation of about 1,000 miles of new coastline.

HONESTY IN PRISONERS.

Recently a visitor to the Tombs dropped \$140, and although he was pretty sure where he had lost the money he gave up hope of getting it again. Besides, there was a repugnance to telling how careless he had been when the very surroundings should have enjoined caution upon him. Strange to relate, a prisoner found the money and duly handed it in to the warden. Seems an odd thing to many, but it is by no means unprecedented.

Once during a visit to Sing Sing a Manhattan politician in an experimental mood left his gold watch and chain on a work bench in one of the buildings where convicts were engaged in fabric work. He kept a sharp eye out, for he didn't propose to lose his watch, which had been presented

to him by admiring associates of a ward club of which he had been president. After ten minutes the politician returned and could not find his watch. He had noticed several convicts passing in and out, one of them passing quite near him. He complained of his loss to the head keeper. The convicts were lined up. One of them, the man who passed close, grinned. "Are you looking for your watch?" he asked. "I certainly am," said the politician severely. "It's in your pocket." So it was. The man who passed close had put it there. He was a clever pickpocket. He enjoyed the laugh, and then said: "If it had only been gold." The politician retorted that it was gold. "Oh, no it isn't," said the convict. "But it was given to me by my club. It is an expensive watch." The convict grinned again. "I know the club," said he, "and I know the man they gave the money to buy it. He's up here now. He bought a pretty good watch—a fairly good one—but it's plated."

EXPLORER FINDS PYGMY TRIBE.

Captain Cecil G. Rawling, the explorer, has recently given English scientists some interesting accounts of a new tribe of pygmies, found by his expedition in southwest Dutch New Guinea.

These little people, known as the Tapiros, average 4 feet $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height. They were found living in the low-lying hills of the Kapare River. On the approach of the white men they ran away, but the expedition succeeded in capturing three, whose curiosity brought them near camp. At first they were greatly frightened, but kindness won them over and a few months later the explorers were enabled to establish trading relations with the tribe and were allowed to visit and stay in their village of Wombirmi. This village is hidden away in the forest high up the mountainside, and was only found after many fruitless attempts. While no open hostility was shown to the whites, they were not exactly received with open arms. Of the women and children they saw nothing, but their shrill cries could be heard as they fled up the mountainside on the approach of a stranger.

Describing the men, Captain Rawling says, taken as a whole, that they are well made and wiry, while their color is a dark chocolate. The hair, usually black, but sometimes with a touch of brown or even red, is worn short. Many grow beards, the older men dyeing theirs red. Like all native tribes, they wear necklets of animal bones and other small possessions. Their only clothing consists of a covering around the loins.

"Their houses and surroundings," says Captain Rawling, "are considerably in advance of those of their large-framed brethren of the plains. To the list of Negritos, which with the Negrillos are the known tribes of pygmies inhabiting the earth, must now be added the newly discovered tribe of Tapiros, who, so far as their stature is concerned, take rank next above the Congo pygmies."

MARK, THE MONEY MAKER

—OR—

HOW A SMART BOY GOT RICH

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVIII (continued)

But the lawyer took a different view of the matter.

"The law is peculiar in regard to the rights of adopted children," he said. "It is easy to set aside a guardianship, but not to break the hold of a foster-parent. I would advise the young girl to make her escape. Liberty will be her advantage, for then she can resist apprehension, and thus bring the case to trial, on grounds of defense, which is always a more successful way. Instead of prosecuting her foster-father, he becomes the prosecutor and she the defendant."

"I will send her word," said Mark.

"Be very careful, however, that you do not compromise your interests. You must not assume influence."

"No," replied Mark. "I shall simply report on your opinion."

"That is it. Keep strictly non-committal."

On this advice Mark prepared to act. But before he could do so, the affair which almost resulted in a tragedy occurred.

Mark always believed it was the hand of Providence which led him to take a late stroll down to the company's wharves that night.

It was as dark as Egypt. A light burned in Mr. Paulding's office. The assistant manager often remained there until late at night poring over his ledgers.

"I will drop in and chat with him," thought Mark, "and we may walk home together."

With this purpose in mind he turned to go down to the wharf. As he did so, he was startled to see a couple of dark figures glide from the deep shadows on the other side of the wharf.

Then the light went out in the office, the door clanged, and Mr. Paulding stepped out.

Instantly the dark figures came up swiftly behind him. Mark saw their purpose, and for a moment his heart stood still. Then he shouted:

"Mr. Paulding! Quick! for your life, run."

The warning caused the assistant manager to turn his head.

The two unknown assailants were upon him, and he went down beneath a crushing blow. Then Mark's eyes saw everything in a red light of frenzy.

Down he leaped upon the wharf like a tiger. He seized a heavy loggers' pole and swung it over his head. It swept the two would-be murderers from their feet.

They went down in a heap and their knives stuck in the wharf. But they were instantly upon their feet and fled.

Mark did not pursue them.

He thought only of Mr. Paulding, who might be dying from the stab wound he had received. Mark kicked open the office door and lit the gas.

Then he carried the stricken man into the place and stretched him upon a settee. He made a swift but careful examination.

To his joy Mr. Paulding opened his eyes and said:

"It's all right, my boy. My arm saved me. It's only a cut, that's all. Give me a handkerchief and we'll bind it up."

This was done. The flow of blood staunched, Mr. Paulding sat up.

"Thank heavens, you were not killed," declared Mark. "I am so thankful I happened to be down this way."

"It was fortunate. But for your cry they would have killed me."

"What could have been their purpose? Were they robbers?"

Mr. Paulding seemed mystified.

"I cannot imagine," he said. "I did not know that I had a foe in the world."

They looked at each other in the glimmering gas light. Then Mark said with a queer premonition:

"I have a horrible suspicion!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Paulding, "I can understand it. I thought of the same thing. But why did they single me out for destruction? I don't understand it!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A CHAPTER FROM THE PAST.

It was indeed odd that the attempt at murder should have been made upon Mr. Paulding, as regarded from his and Mark's point of view.

Mr. Paulding's wound was now staunched and he felt quite comfortable. The escape, however, had been a very narrow one.

"I don't understand it," said Mark, in a mystified way. "If those ruffians were hired by May to come here they must have selected the wrong victim."

"Certainly I can see nothing to be gained by them in putting me out of the way," declared Mr. Paulding.

"Nothing at all."

"However, there is no way of guessing the truth as yet. Such matters usually clear themselves up in time. We will

wait and see what the outcome will be. Well, I feel all right now, Mark. Let us lock up the office and go home. You don't think those rascals will return?"

"I hardly think so," said Mark. "Let us follow your suggestion."

So the office was locked and they left the wharf.

Mark kept a keen lookout in the gloom. But nothing more was seen of the would-be assassins.

The matter remained a deep mystery. When the boarding-house was reached Mr. Paulding said:

"Come into my room, Mark. I want to tell you something."

Wonderingly the young financier obeyed. They sat before a cheerful fire, and Mr. Paulding's face grew pale and grave.

"I have been thinking, Mark," he said, "and it is possible that the assault upon me to-night may be explained in some incidents of my past life."

Mark looked curiously at his friend.

"I cannot understand how you could ever win the enmity of any man," he said.

"Ah, the love of gain often drives the man of weak character to deeds of desperation and crime," said Mr. Paulding. "I was once the victim of such a person, and he claimed to be my friend. I must go back into a dim and shadowy past, a past which I had buried and hoped never again to resurrect."

There was something like a choking sob in his voice. He was silent for some moments. The fire crackled and cast deeper shadows.

"It was full eighteen years ago," he said, "and the story I am going to confide to you, Mark, is a secret which I know you will not betray."

"Never!" said Mark, impulsively.

"Then let me take you to the slums of New York, to that part of the city known as the East Side. There in a wretched tenement lived Gerald Eustace, his wife and infant daughter.

"Eustace had come from England, banished by his father, a man of great wealth, because of his lowly marriage. True to the woman he loved, Eustace left England and sought his fortune in America.

"It was a hard struggle and dire poverty resulted. In the same tenement dwelt Stephen Ward, who had a wife and son. Ward and Eustace became friends in poverty. When Eustace's wife died the Wards gave him much assistance. The blow was a very hard one for Eustace, but he had his little daughter left, and decided to return to England as soon as he could earn the money to pay his passage.

"At this juncture word came from England that Eustace's father had died and left him a fortune of sixty thousand pounds, or about three hundred thousand dollars.

"The news decided Eustace at once to return to England. He told his neighbor Ward of his good luck. It had the effect upon Ward of arousing his jealousy.

"He saw Eustace returning to England to enjoy wealth, while he must remain forever in poverty. The result was that Ward decoyed Eustace to a lonely wharf late at night, struck him on the head and threw him into the river.

"Eustace might have died in the cold water of the river but for rescue afforded by a police boat, which picked him

up. But the blow on the head had destroyed his memory and he was unable to tell who he was or where he belonged.

"He was taken to an asylum and there spent ten years of a clouded life. Then a kindly surgeon performed an operation on the skull which restored the unfortunate man's reason.

"Ten years had slipped by. There had been many changes. The tenements in that squalid East Side region held new families. He searched in vain for a trace of Stephen Ward. He ransacked the city records for a trace of his lost child.

"Next he sought to recover the estate left him by his father's will. He then learned that a forged transfer of rights had been filed by Stephen Ward in favor of Eustace's child, who inherited the money, and it had been paid to Ward as trustee.

"For years Eustace searched the country over for a trace of Stephen Ward. Indeed he is searching yet. But not the slightest clew can be found."

A deep sigh finished this last remark.

Mark had listened with deep interest. He looked into Mr. Paulding's eyes and asked:

"And Eustace?"

"Yes," said Mr. Paulding, quietly. "The man Eustace is myself. I adopted a fictitious name to aid me in my quest. But I fear it is hopeless."

Mark drew a deep breath.

"That is very strange," he said. "It was certainly a terrible thing for Stephen Ward to do. I hope you will some day find him."

"When I do," Mr. Paulding's eyes burned with a strange light, "there will be a reckoning. I cannot say just what I shall do. But it will be a dark hour for the false friend.

"So you see, my boy, my first thought has been that the attempt on my life originated from some such source. Perhaps I have been seen and recognized by my old enemy. He may see his interests imperiled and seek to make the blow sure this time."

"In that case, then, we do wrong to suspect May," said Mark.

"Oh, I am not certain that the attempted assassination was made by any emissaries of my old-time foe, who possibly is dead or in some place far from here by this time."

"In that case, we may assume that May is the guilty party."

"But if so, why should he seek to remove me?"

"It may be part of a general plot against me and my friends," said Mark. "I shall be on my guard henceforth."

"It is indeed well to do so," said Mr. Paulding.

"You see, May is getting desperate. They do say he is on the verge of utter ruin. It was a bad move of his securing the oil well stock."

"He has brought all his troubles upon himself."

"That is so."

"He deserves richly the tide of evil fortune which is swooping down upon him. I can assure you, I have very little sympathy for him. He has tried to injure others and has only hurt himself."

FROM ALL POINTS

With the opening of the Fall term of the public schools in Passaic, N. J., it is planned that one period during each day will be set aside for pupils to take a bath. This does not mean that the pupils will be required to take a bath every day, but there will be stipulated periods when children will be led under shower baths and given a thorough washing. This idea is being promoted by a civic organization of the city in which there are a number of leading business men and is endorsed by the Superintendent of Schools.

An explosive ten times more powerful than dynamite has been discovered. The discoverer is Prof. Darsonvill of the College of France. Important results are expected from it. Prof. Darsonvill has just made his discovery public at Leraure. The new explosive gets its force from the liquefaction of gases. It probably will be called Darsonvillite, and consists simply of a mixture of lamp black and liquid gas. Many experiments have been made with it in quarries near Paris, and it is said to have been satisfactory in every way.

To the collection of Revolutionary relics in Continental Memorial Hall, Washington, is to be added a walking stick made from one of the timbers of John Paul Jones' famous old ship the *Alliance*. The stick will be loaned to the collection by Miss Marion H. Brazier, of Boston. It was once the property of Captain U. Shillaber, who carried it on three voyages around the world on sailing ships. He willed it to his brother, who left it to Mrs. Emma S. Clement, of Newton, Mass. The cane was acquired by the John Paul Jones Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution last year.

A new type of steam ferry has lately been put in use at the port of Hamburg. It somewhat resembles a craft used in England for a few years past, and is characterized by the fact that the main deck is movable and can be raised or lowered by as much as 15 feet, the deck being strong enough to carry six large hauling wagons. The daily variations in the tide level at Hamburg made this kind of ferryboat necessary. Of 170 tons displacement, the new ferry is 120 feet long and 50 feet wide and carries triple-expansion engines giving 650 horse-power. When the boat enters the wharf it comes into a small and completely sheltered dock.

Emulating the simians, birds and other creatures of nature, the Ardenites of Arden, Del., have taken to sleeping in the trees. Aerial bungalows are the latest innovation in this colony of single taxers and socialists, and, in consequence, there is much gossip there among the boughs at night. Frederick Whiteside and his brother were the first to affect the treetop summer home. They planned their bungalow in the midst of four tall poplars, and, after several days' work, a little bungalow, with a rustic staircase

thirty feet high leading to it, was completed. As soon as the new home in "Poplar Row" was finished, "Billy" Worthington emulated the Whitesides. Then Fielding Downs, the leader of all things musical at Arden, thought he, too, would have one, and one by one the colonists determined to slumber in the tall timber. None of those who have tried the pure oxygen treatment at night in the treetops say they want to sleep near the ground again.

War Department officials have been placed in an embarrassing position, it became known recently, by a request from agents of the French Government for the assistance of the department's ordnance bureau in perfecting the smokeless powder now used by the French army and navy. A series of unexplained disastrous explosions in the French magazines aboard ship and ashore is said to have led to this request, which is unusual in view of the consistent efforts made by most nations to protect the secret of their powder preparations. The War Department buys all of its powder under contract from an American company, and this corporation has protested vigorously against the disclosure of its trade secrets to a foreign government, asserting that, from patriotic motives, it had previously rejected overtures from this foreign government to sell it powder or to establish a powder factory in France.

Fruits are a rapidly growing factor in the foreign trade of the United States. The value of fruits and nuts passing through the Custom Houses of the United States in the fiscal year just ended approximates \$90,000,000, and is twice as great as that of a decade ago. The exports of the fiscal year 1913 amount to \$37,000,000, speaking in round terms, against \$18,000,000 in 1903, a decade earlier; and the imports approximate \$42,000,000 against \$24,000,000 in 1903. These figures do not include the trade with Hawaii and Porto Rico, which sent to continental United States over \$6,500,000 worth of fruits and nuts during the last fiscal year. Fruits exported are chiefly apples, prunes, apricots, raisins and oranges, and go largely to Europe; while those imported are chiefly bananas, lemons, olives, currants and grapes. The imports of nuts, almonds, walnuts, cocoanuts and cocoanut meat are drawn principally from the tropics. Of the \$37,000,000 worth of fruits exported during the year, apples alone amounted to about \$11,000,000 in value, of which about \$8,000,000 were in their natural state and about \$3,000,000 dried. Europe takes the bulk of apples, both green and dried, having taken in 1912, from which period complete figures are at hand, over four-fifths of the total. England is by far the greatest purchaser of fruit in the natural state, having taken, in 1912, \$2,750,000 worth of green apples, against \$750,000 by Canada, and \$500,000 by Germany. Of the dried apples exported, Germany is the largest purchaser, having taken in 1912, \$2,333,000 worth, against \$1,125,000, by the Netherlands and \$125,000 worth by Belgium.

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BRIEF BUT POINTED ITEMS

Count von Zeppelin is building his largest dirigible with a view to crossing the Atlantic to the United States in the late summer. He expects to make the trip in from thirty to sixty hours' time. German warships are to be distributed along the course to assist the airship in case it is obliged to descend.

The Paris fire department intends to double the capacity afforded by its present automobile fire engine, by the use of fifteen automobile fire pumps which will be of a lighter design than the ones already in use. The new engines will carry six men instead of fifteen. On the wagon truck is mounted a 100-gallon tank so as to afford an immediate water supply for the hose so that a stream can be put on the fire at once, while the connection is being made with the fire plug. This type of light engine is especially intended for fighting moderate-sized fires during the daytime. The number of automobiles used by the chief firemen is also to be increased.

In order that all her animal pets might be cared for Mrs. Edith Rogers Gallatly, of 34 West Fifty-seventh street, New York, who died on July 17 at Westport, Conn., provided in her will, which was filed recently, that all her stock in the Paterson & Ramapo Railroad and in the Paterson & Hudson River Railroad should be used "for the joint and several benefits of such horses and dogs as I may die possessed of. The interest alone is to be used to provide the animals with a good home and the surplus, if any, to be added to the principal, and on the death of the last surviving animal to be given to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as a trust fund, the interest to be used each year to prevent cruelty to animals and provide homes for the same."

George B. Cortelyou, president of the Consolidate Gas Company, of New York, stood at a silver mounted contact key three hundred feet beneath the surface of the Bronx River the other afternoon and sent an electric spark into a charge of dynamite which lifted the last stone barrier from the new Astoria tunnel. William H. Bradley, chief engineer, stood at his side. Mr. Cortelyou led a party of forty men down into the tunnel to witness the final

opening. Each was clad in high top boots, rubber coats and rubber hats. As Mr. Cortelyou touched the contact key deafening echoes of the heavy blast boomed through the underground passage. Down the dimly lighted corridor a great wall of rock trembled and fell in fragments. The blast welded another link between Long Island and New York City. The Astoria tunnel, through which two gas mains, each six feet in diameter are to be laid, was begun in the summer of 1910. It lies at a depth of 246 feet, is one mile long, 21 feet high and 19 feet 9 inches wide. The Bronx shaft is at Port Morris and the Queens at Astoria. Engineers look on the Astoria tunnel as a marvelous piece of work because of difficulties overcome in the 400-foot "trouble zone," and because only two workmen lost their lives.

JOKES AND JESTS.

Madge—How proud Mame is since she ordered her bicycle. Tom—Well, you know, pride goes before a fall.

Mrs. Welment—Poor fellow! Have you no friends? Beggar (sobbing)—No, leddy; I hain't got nuthin' but relatives.

Smithers—Do you think Charley Litewate's jokes are all original? Nubbins—Yes; they are too stupid to be borrowed from anybody else.

"How many more times have I to tell you I don't want a cab? I want to walk." "All right, sir; put yer bag inside and run behind."

Angry Father (to his son)—You never saw me getting into a scrape like that when I was a boy. Flippant Son—No, I don't think I ever did.

Correspondent—I should like to write for your paper. You want the manuscript sheets blank on one side, don't you? Managing Editor—On both sides, if you please.

"What you need is a warmer climate, Mr. Grumpey," said the doctor in his most persuasive tone. "I guess you'll get me there all right enough," was the ungracious response.

"Slingink has got out a new book—'Poets and Poetry of Patagonia.'" "Why, he doesn't know anything about Patagonia." "Neither do the people to whom he sells his book."

"Yes, I need a clerk," said the hotel proprietor in reply to an applicant for that place; "but have you ever held such a situation?" "Yes, sir," was the reply; "I am thoroughly inn-experienced."

He—As our engagement is canceled, of course you will return that diamond ring? She—Mr. Styles, you said I was a peach the day you gave me that ring. Well, if I am a peach of the clingstone variety, therefore I'll keep the diamond.

A COMBAT IN THE DARK.

By Kit Clyde.

I was living in Calcutta at the time, says a writer, and was the one American in a firm of Englishmen who were doing business with the interior on quite an extensive scale. Twice a year, for several years in succession, I went on long journeys which took me several hundred miles inland, and often into very wild portions of the country, but after the first two or three trips I became so accustomed to the people with whom I had to deal and the roads I had to traverse that I lost all fear of either.

I would scarcely take the pains to go armed. Indeed, on one of my trips I made the entire round with not even a pistol, but the other members of the firm objected to what they considered a needless exposure of my life. After that I carried a pair of 45-caliber pistols at my saddle, but I really had not the slightest expectation of ever using them.

I had been riding all day among a ridge that ran like a backbone from near the coast to a good many miles up in the country. I had overtaken an acquaintance along in the afternoon and we journeyed on very pleasantly together for several hours. Toward sunset we noticed that all the sky was getting lighted up with a great jungle fire off to our right, but that was a matter of too common occurrence to bear more than a passing comment. We would not have mentioned it at all, probably, but for two or three small wild animals that ran across our path, driven out of their dens in the jungle by the fire.

"By the way, where will you pass the night?" my companion asked me, as the brief Indian twilight began to descend. I mentioned the name of a curious old Scotch hermit, McGowan his name was, who lived a little way off the main road, and whom I had visited before; but my companions declared that he must positively reach the next town that night. He urged me to go on with him, but the next town was five miles further on, and I was desperately tired. Besides, I wanted to see old McGowan. So at the turn of the road I reluctantly bade my friend adieu and rode off my own way.

Never in all my experience of the country had the twilight seemed quite so brief. Before I could think, almost, it was dark, and the red glare of the jungle fire in the sky, away to the east, only served to make the darkness more confusing. The consequence was that in about ten minutes I was lost. I concluded that I had turned off from the main road too soon. Then I tried to go back and start over again, and I couldn't find the main road. It is needless to say that I grew more and more confused, and that in a very short time that fire even had skipped around, and was in an entirely different quarter, and that the very tars had changed positions, and were not to be relied on in the least.

And then all at once, in some unexpected way, I came up with McGowan's house. I was so overjoyed that I sent a cheery "Hello!" on before me by way of greeting, but nothing but the echoes answered it. My horse snorted and was extremely restless and uneasy but I took his saddle off and turned him into the little inclosure, as I had done on former occasions, and going up to the door I gave a loud

knock. No answer. It began to be evident that for once the old man was away from home.

Still, I could go no further that night. I must try to get in somehow. And so I turned the knob, but finding the door locked was about to give up, when my hand accidentally touched the key. The door had been locked on the outside. I was certain then that McGowan could not be far away, and that he would be back presently; so I unlocked the door and went in without further ceremony, closing the door after me, and throwing my saddle down beside it, with my pistols still in the holsters.

I had been sitting there as much as twenty minutes, I should think, when I was startled by a sound that, faint as it was, made me jump as though it had been a thunder-clap. It was only the moving of a chair over on the other side of the room. It rattled so slightly, but of course I knew that it did not move by itself.

"Hello, McGowan!" I exclaimed, turning in the direction of the sound. "Is that you, after all? Didn't you hear me calling you when I came in?" There was no answer, and everything was deadly still. For several minutes I almost held my breath, listening. It was not that I heard anything. I felt, rather, that I was not alone in the room. And when, presently, I heard a soft footfall, my heart jumped into my mouth. I was worse frightened than I had been in all my life. I was in the dark, locked in with somebody or something; a terrible ghostly presence that filled me with dread.

If I could only have reached my pistols—but they were in the saddle holsters, over by the door, and that footfall had sounded in that direction. I stood perfectly still, drawn up against the wall, afraid to move hand or foot. I had turned cold, and was in the most utterly helpless condition that had ever come upon me in all my life. Listening intently as I was, my senses were quickened until I could hear sounds that would have made no impression on me under ordinary circumstances. In a little while I heard that stealthy step only a little distance away, between me and the corner of the room. Hurriedly I stole away, involuntarily tiptoeing and trying to be as stealthy as my enemy. And, feeling my way thus about the room, I put my hand on another table, and there my fingers fell upon a match.

It may be imagined how I grasped it, and with what care I struck it, and when it was once fairly burning I raised it up and looked across the room to where—heaven and earth—the match fell from my hand and went out, leaving me in the dark with the largest Bengal tiger I had ever seen!

My heart beat so loudly I could hear it distinctly, and for a little while it was the only sound in the room. Then the stealthy gliding and the grim pursuit began again, and here and there I went, always trying to keep as far as possible from the terrible creature that was circling around the room. My condition was such a desperate one that I did not even think of any hope of escaping. I had even forgotten all about my pistols until, happening to touch the saddle with my foot, I remembered them. Hastily stooping, I snatched one of the pistols from the holster. A deep growl greeted the movement, and a sound followed that made me think the animal was preparing to spring. I

braced myself against the wall, held my pistol ready and waited.

But the shock did not come. I was to endure the agony of suspense still longer. Again the gliding motion began, signaled by soft footfalls, or by here and there the slight moving of a chair, as the tiger touched it in passing. This kept up until I felt that it would be utterly impossible to endure it longer. I was a good shot, and, what is better, a quick one. I resolved to fire the pistol into the room, and, having located the tiger by the first flash, to give him the benefit of the other barrels. It was a desperate chance, but if ever a man was justified in taking desperate chances I was at that time. I was near the corner of the room.

I got up into the corner and braced myself against the two walls and fired. The flash showed me the tiger almost in the middle of the room, with body lowered and cruel head nearly touching the floor. I never will forget the picture photographed in my mind by that one flash of light. Before one could think, almost, I had followed that first shot with two others, directed straight at that terrible creature in the middle of the room; but then the tiger sprang upon me, bearing me to the floor as though I had been a baby, and crushing my left shoulder and arm with its terrible teeth. But even as I fell I had presence of mind enough to empty the pistol into its body as it crouched upon me. And by some fortunate chance one of those shots struck some vital part, and with a savage cry the tiger rolled away from me.

I did not wait to see about it. My long suspense and the agony of my broken shoulder were too much for me, and I went into a swoon. When I awoke to consciousness the room was full of people—McGowan and the man who had traveled with me and a crowd of men from the next town—and the great tiger lay stretched upon the floor in a pool of blood.

"What did you mean by it?" said old McGowan, when my wounds had been attended to. "The fire drove the beast out o' the jungle, so when I came in from work and found him in my house I locked him in there and went for help. What call did you have to lock yourself up with a tiger, eh?"

But, all the same, the tiger was dead, even if I had fought my fight in the dark, and even though I was not a hunter at all, and was not hunting tigers that evening anyway.

BATTLE WITH APES.

The patrons of the Wigwam Theatre witnessed an exciting battle in San Francisco some years ago, and it was not down on the programme. It was a fight in which a man and woman did battle for their lives against a couple of monster apes, and it was only by the courage and presence of mind of some ten attaches of the theatre that the enraged brutes were prevented from killing both people.

Part of the evening's entertainment was furnished by Professor Samwells' troupe of trained animals, consisting of goats, dogs, cats and five large apes. Samwells handled the animals himself while on the stage; his wife and their

assistants remained in the wings, ready to take charge of the animals as they went off the stage.

The monkeys were kept in a large cage, and this had always been looked after by Mrs. Samwells, she taking the animals out and returning them to the cage when her husband was through with them. During the last part of the performance the largest ape was dressed like a lady, and rode about the stage in a little phaeton drawn by one of the dogs.

When the ape was sent on the stage by Mrs. Samwells, it was rather sullen, and at first refused to get into the vehicle. It showed its teeth every time its master approached, but was at last induced to take its seat in the phaeton.

The professor patted it on the head and then stooped to adjust the harness on the canine steed. Then quick as a flash the cunning brute sprang from the vehicle and fastened its long tusks in his wrist, driving them clear to the bone. In an instant the house was in an uproar, women screamed, and strong men turned their heads aside as the maddened brute bit and tore at the man's arm, while his screams for help ran through the building.

"Grace, Grace, take him off; he is killing me," shouted Samwells to his wife. Mrs. Samwells, who was holding another huge ape in her arms, threw the animal from her and rushed on the stage to her husband's assistance. She seized the big ape by the throat and tried with all her strength to choke the beast in order to open its jaws, but she might as well have tried to strangle a Bengal tiger.

She then did what few men would have done, thrust her hand into the brute's mouth and by a superhuman effort wrenched the terrible jaws apart. It was just at this instant that the ape which Mrs. Samwells had left in the wing sprang on the stage, as if to the assistance of its comrade. There was a cry of "look out for the other one," and the next instant the newcomer had seized the woman by the left hand and driven his sharp teeth clear through it. Samwells, now free from the grasp of the first monster, rushed to aid his wife, but he could render but little assistance, as both his hands were almost torn to pieces.

At this moment several men rushed on the stage and the fierce brutes were beaten into insensibility with clubs and pieces of board torn from the scenery. The victims were carried from the stage, and as soon as the patrol wagon arrived were taken to the Receiving Hospital.

Dr. Simpson, who was in attendance, found that the man's left thumb was almost torn from the hand. The tendons were completely severed, and there were a dozen wounds, reaching from the tips of the fingers far up on the wrist. The wounds made by the animals' teeth looked as if they had been inflicted by a tiger, so badly was the flesh torn and lacerated. Every one of the wounds had to be sewed up, and after this was done and the dressing applied Mrs. Samwells was attended to. She was not nearly so badly injured as her husband.

Mrs. Samwells said that this was the second time the same brute had attacked her husband. They were showing in San Jose on Thanksgiving Day, and after the street parade the brute sprang at Samwells while he was undressing it, and tore his right hand in a fearful manner. The injury was not properly attended to and blood poisoning set in. It was only by calling in the best surgical aid in the city that his life was saved.

GOOD READING

A world's golfing record was established in the elimination play of the Western championship tournament at the Homewood Country Club, Chicago, the other day, by E. P. Allis, 3d, of Milwaukee. Allis holed out in one from the first tee, the first time in recorded annals of the game that such a feat has been accomplished at the distance—290 yards. Allis' drive was perfect, according to experts, who said the ball would not have rolled six inches further had it missed the cup.

It is reported that four large battle-cruisers are to be laid down this year in the Russian yards, and that they will be among the largest of their class in existence, each ship being of 30,000 tons displacement and driven by turbines of 75,000 horse-power. Also eight torpedo-boat destroyers of the largest size, similar in design to the "Novik," are being built, the hulls in Russia and the turbines by the Vulcan Company of Hamburg. These ships will be of 1,280 tons displacement and will be designed for 35 knots. The "Novik" made 36 knots on trial and is to-day the fastest ocean vessel afloat.

David J. Smith and William Duncan, fishermen of New Castle, Del., had an hour's fight with a man-eating shark in the middle of Delaware Bay, near Ship John Lighthouse, the other day. The two men were fishing for sturgeon, which are worth \$200 each, when they saw their net sinking, and, drawing it in, found a twelve-foot shark entangled in it. Smith thrust a large hook into the huge fish several times. The shark then tried to bite through the hull of the boat, but its teeth broke off. Smith again imbedded the hook in the fish, and it thrashed about so savagely it got away.

The downward sliding movement of the top of Mount Caroline, Switzerland, which threatened to overwhelm the village of Fleurier a couple of weeks ago, has stopped, but the people in the valley live in hourly anxiety that the millions of tons of rock and earth above them will fall upon the town. The authorities have ordered the inhabitants of the danger zone to move temporarily. Watchers have been posted on neighboring peaks, connected by improvised telephone lines, with sentinels below, to signal at any moment, day or night, the recurrence of the movement. Deep trenches are being dug at the base of the mountain in the hope of arresting the landslide, if it comes, or at least check it for a few moments.

"A considerable portion of the Atlantic fleet will be transferred to the Pacific Coast for permanent duty shortly after the opening of the Panama Canal," said Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, during a stop in Portland recently en route from Seattle to Los Angeles. "Following the opening of the Panama Canal," Mr. Daniels added, "it is my intention to accompany the At-

lantic fleet through the canal. We are planning at present to leave a considerable portion of the fleet in Pacific waters for permanent duty. Plans to this effect are being made because we consider the Pacific Coast the great frontier of America, and its development is one of the most important factors confronting the nation to-day. Facing the coast is the Orient, with its millions of people and wonderful trade possibilities. "There is more population facing the Pacific Coast than any other boundary of the nation. The importance of the Western coast has long been underestimated."

Wire-glass is said to be both burglar-proof and fire-proof. In the first case, the wire netting embedded in its center cannot, it is claimed, be broken or cut noiselessly, so that entrance by means of doors or cellar coverings of this material by thieves is rendered difficult, if not impossible. Such glass is, however, more often employed for fireproofing than for other purposes, and it enters largely into the construction of elevator doors, partitions, windows, etc. One expert, who has tested wire-glass up to 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit, keeping it at this high temperature for half an hour at a time, states that at the first rush of heat the glass crackles, but that the netting holds it together so that flames cannot pass through. It will, it seems, hold flame up to the melting-point, which is different in different kinds of glass, since some melt at 1,000 degrees and others withstand 2,000 degrees successfully. When a stream of water is turned on wire-glass that has melted almost to the running point, it immediately solidifies, so that it is a material well suited for elevator shafts, where a sudden rush of flame would crack ordinary glass and admit fire to all floors.

Much has been said with reference to the adaptations in nature to the wants of mankind. Another point of view shows the same facts as evidence that man has adapted himself to the varying conditions of life. An exception to what is regarded as a general law is found in the distribution of fishes. It is observed that in the warm waters of the Nile, for instance, fish of many kinds abound, but that they are all of poor quality. Indeed, the same might be said of the fish in all warm waters. Very few varieties, competent authorities assure us, are fit for the table. Now, it happens to be the case that in hot climates the lighter sorts of food are most in demand. The human system does not need in the tropics the meats that so largely compose the food of men in colder regions. The sending of fish from Norway to the countries about the Mediterranean is one of the oldest branches of trade in the history of commerce. Where the fish was of good quality the population was scanty, and, on the other hand, where the population was numerous the fish was poor. It seems to be a reasonable inference that both men and fish have sought the portions of the globe where the conditions of life were most favorable to them respectively.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

The army dirigible Schuette-Lanz was completely wrecked, one soldier was killed and one fatally injured when the huge airship broke from its anchorage near Schneidemuehl the other day. The big dirigible, which is of the new type, 500 feet long, broke away from its moorings when the sun caused an expansion of the gas. Two soldiers, who were on sentry duty, rushed to the ropes when the Schuette-Lanz began to break away. As they struggled to make the ropes secure the soldiers became entangled and as the balloon arose they were carried up with it. At a height of 200 feet the men held on desperately to the ropes, but were finally shaken off. One was dead when picked up and there is no hope for the recovery of the other. The big dirigible cruised for an hour without a crew or pilot before it came down. Then it fell in a forest and was wrecked.

SEALED ALIVE IN A SOLID STONE WALL.

The identity and fate of a young girl who was walled up and left to die in a building near Barcelona, Spain, has caused the Spanish authorities to institute a rigid investigation. The affair was made public through the statement made by Esteban Gutierrez, a stonemason, who tells a thrilling story of how he was compelled, at the point of a revolver, to do the work.

Gutierrez declares that, after he had advertised in a newspaper for work, two well-dressed men called at his address and asked him to accompany them in a motor car into the country a short distance to make some urgent repairs.

Reaching a dense woods on the outskirts of the city, the two men and a chauffeur seized, bound and blindfolded the stonemason, and a few minutes later the car stopped in front of a lonely house.

The mason declares he was led inside and ordered to wall up a narrow aperture, the stone and mortar being in readiness. Gutierrez says he heard some one sobbing, and, tearing the bandage from his eyes, he saw a young girl, bound with ropes and wedged in the aperture.

He was promptly knocked down by his captors, and, when he arose was ordered to build a wall so as to enclose the girl, and when he refused was threatened with revolvers. The mason declares that, at the points of the guns, he was compelled to wall up the young girl, after which the car conveyed him to the woods several miles away, when he was unbound, given \$20 in silver and warned not to speak of the incident. Lost, he wandered several hours before he was discovered by a woodsman, and, reaching Barcelona, he went at once to the police.

AMERICAN SHOES EVERYWHERE.

What boots it if other nations of the world export their shoes? Uncle Sam certainly has a walkover everywhere he sends his own lasts. He has all countries by the heels, as it

were, when it comes to footwear to sell. American shoes are just as common in Hong Kong as they are in Piccadilly; you can buy good ones at the general store in the Australian bush or pick up a pair in Chile or Cape Town. At some far distant point Yankee shoes seem to be the sole import.

American footgear brings the highest prices in Australian cities. Shoes that fetch \$5 in New York cost \$11 there. Makes retailing in the United States at \$2.50 and \$3.50 are priced at \$6.50 and \$7.50 in the Antipodean continent. Though the tariff favors English-made shoes there by 14 per cent. and Australian-made shoes can be had from \$2.50 to \$4.50, American shoes go like hotcakes to those who can afford to pay the higher price.

Wages have gone up in Chile, and this always means an added demand for shoes. According to consular reports from Santiago, the imports of American shoes are now abnormal, especially among the better grades. No other shoe exporting country is in our class in Chile.

So it goes in Switzerland. One of the most popular imports there of American manufacture is shoes, and each year the demand is greater. The general use of motor cars, motorcycles and bicycles has rendered obsolete the heavy footwear once in vogue in Switzerland and the lighter, more comfortable, better fitting and far more stylish American shoe is supplanting home makes. Only a few years ago a rarity, now all the better class of shops in Switzerland display Uncle Sam's shoes and advertise them as "American." Only the more conservative styles were bought at first, but now the latest Broadway and Fifth avenue shapes go just as well under the shadow of the Alps as they do in the streets of skyscraping New York.

Our shoes are in brisk demand in the Netherlands and cost about 30 per cent. more than they do here. So clever are the Dutch in imitating, however, that they make their own shoes in their factories and label them "American." Poor Uncle Sam has no redress. "The reputation of American shoes in Hungary," write Deputy Consul General Kemeny at Budapest, "is good and it is fashionable to wear them now." The Hungarians use about \$1,000,000 of our shoes every year and would buy more if their middlemen could get their stocks on the same terms as European houses sell.

The sale of American shoes in Budapest is in the hand of a few men who can afford to buy goods for cash. The consequence is that they make prices as high as they think people are able to pay. The pair of shoes in America for \$2.50 wholesale costs there from \$5 to \$7 retail.

In most places in France American shoes have the call. In fact, if they are designated as of Yankee make this means general excellence and the chance of a better price for the retailer. Lasts that are popular in the United States are all the go with Johnny Crapaud and even ultra fashions are to his liking. American rubber, storm slippers and sandals are also widely used.

As for London, there are plenty of shops where only Yankee shoes can be had.

ITCH POWDER.



Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It

will make him scratch, rear, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 16 cents a box, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK BANKS.

Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickelized brass. It holds just One Dime. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.

The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every neck and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

X-RAY WONDER

This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE SWIMMING FISH

Here is a fine mechanical toy. It is an imitation goldfish, about 4½ inches long, and contains a water-tight compartment which will not allow it to sink. To keep it in a natural position, the lower fin is ballasted with lead. To make it work, a spring is wound up. You then throw it in the water, and the machinery inside causes the tail to wiggle, and propel it in the most lifelike manner. When it runs down the fish floats until it is recovered, and it can then be rewound. Races between two of these fishes are very interesting. Price, 25 cents each by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

LAUGHABLE EGG TRICK

This is the funniest trick ever exhibited and always produces roars of laughter. The performer says to the audience that he requires some eggs for one of his experiments. As no spectator carries any, he calls his assistant, taps him on top of the head, he gags, and an egg comes out of his mouth. This is repeated until six eggs are produced. It is an easy trick to perform, once you know how, and always makes a hit. Directions given for working it. Price, 25 cents by mail, postpaid. H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CARTER AEROPLANE No. 1.

Will fly on a horizontal line 150 feet! Can be flown in the house, and will not injure itself nor anything in the room. The most perfect little aeroplane made. The motive power is furnished by twisted rubber bands contained within the tubular body of the machine. It is actuated by a propeller at each end revolving in opposite directions. Variation in height may be obtained by moving the planes and the balance weight. It can be made to fly either to the right or the left by moving the balance sideways before it is released for flight. Price, 35c. each, delivered. L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



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Remington-UMC .22 cal. cartridges have broken two records in two years.

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THE BUGHOUSE PUZZLE.

It is the most mystifying puzzle ever invented, and consists of 14 pieces of metal, packed in a neat little box. With them you can form a checker board—that is, if you know how. The trick is to do it, and a tougher job you never tackled. Several other interesting combinations are possible. Get a box and see how many you can do. Price 12 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

WHISTLEPHONE

This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistlephone in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air.

Price 6 cents each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.

New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

Ayvad's Water-Wings



Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-hankerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring marks under the mouthpiece.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

TOBACCO HABIT You can conquer it easily in 3 days. Improve your health, prolong your life. No more stomach trouble, no foul breath, no heart weakness. Regain manly vigor, calm nerves, clear eyes and superior mental strength. Whether you chew, or smoke pipe, cigarettes, cigars, get my interesting Tobacco Book. Worth its weight in gold. Mailed free. E. J. WOODS, 534 Sixth Ave., 228 C, New York, N. Y.

Wizard Repeating LIQUID PISTOL



Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury.

Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling the trigger. Loads from any liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Send money order. No postage stamps or coins accepted.

PARKER, STEARNS & CO., 273 GEORGIA AVE., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

NOISY HANDKERCHIEF.

A great deal of amusement may be had with this little article. It imitates the blowing of the nose exactly, except that the noise is magnified at least a dozen times, and sounds like the bass-horn in a German band. This device is used by simply placing it between the teeth and blowing. The harder the blow the louder the noise. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE AUTOPHONE.

A small musical instrument that produces very sweet musical notes by placing it between the lips with the tongue over the edge, and blowing gently into the instrument. The notes produced are not unlike those of the fife and flute. We send full printed instructions whereby anyone can play anything they can hum, whistle or sing, with very little practice. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



ELECTRIC PUSH BUTTON.—The base is made of maple, and the center piece of black walnut, the whole thing about 1½ inches in diameter, with a metal hook on the back so that it may be slipped over edge of the vest pocket. Expose to view your New Electric Bell, when your friend will push the button expecting to hear it ring. As soon as he touches it, you will see some of the liveliest dancing you ever witnessed. The Electric Button is heavily charged and will give a smart shock when the button is pushed.

Price 10c., by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

LITTLE RIP'S TEN-PINS.



In each set there are ten pins and two bowling balls, packed in a beautifully ornamented box. With one of these miniature sets you can play ten-pins on your dining-room table just as well as the game can be played in a regular alley. Every game known to professional bowlers can be worked with these pins. Price, 10c. per box by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

DUPLEX BICYCLE WHISTLE.

This is a double whistle, producing loud but very rich, harmonious sounds, entirely different from ordinary whistles. It is just the thing for bicyclists or sportsmen, its peculiar double and resonant tones at once attracting attention. It is an imported whistle, handsomely nickel plated, and will be found a very useful and handy pocket companion. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen, 75c., sent by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

BUBBLE BLOWER.

With this device, a continuous series of bubbles can be blown. It is a wooden, cigar-shaped blower, encasing a small vial, in which there is a piece of soap. The vial is filled with water, and a peculiarly perforated cork is inserted. When you blow in to the mouthpiece, it sets up a hydraulic pressure through the cork perforations and causes bubble after bubble to come out. No need of dipping into water once the little bottle is filled. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

HALF MASKS.

False-faces beaten a mile! There are 7 in a set and represent an Indian, a Japanese girl, a clown, Foxy Grandpa, an English Johnny Atkins and an Automobilist. Beautifully lithographed in handsome colors on a durable quality of cardboard. They have eyeholes and string perforations. Price, 6c. each, or the full set of 7 for 25c., postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN,
419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

MYSTIC PUZZLE

The newest and most novel puzzle on the market. It consists of a flat piece of wood $1\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, neatly covered with imitation leather. The cross-bar and ring in the hole are nickel-plated. The object is to get the small ring off the bar. It absolutely cannot be done by anyone not in the secret. More fun to be had with it than with any other puzzle made. It is not breakable and can be carried in the vest pocket.

Price 10 cents each by mail, postpaid

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

TABLE RAISING TRICK

The most mystifying trick ever done by a magician. The performer shows a plain light table. He places his hand flat upon its top. The table clings to his hand as if glued there. He may swing it in the air, but the table will not leave his hand until he sets it on the floor again. The table can be inspected to show that there are no strings or wires attached.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, postpaid

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

MUSICAL SEAT

The best joke out. You can have more fun than a circus, with one of these novelties. All you have to do is to place one on a chair seat (hidden under a cushion, if possible). Then tell your friend to sit down. An unearthly shriek from the little round drum will send your victim up in the air, the most puzzled and astonished mortal on earth. Don't miss getting one of these genuine laugh producers. Perfectly harmless, and never misses doing its work.

Price 20 cents each, by mail, postpaid

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

JAPANESE WATER FLOWERS

Without exception, the most beautiful and interesting things on the market. They consist of a dozen dried-up sprigs, neatly encased in handsomely decorated envelopes, just as they are imported from Japan. Place one sprig in a bowl of water, and it begins to exude various bright tints. Then it slowly opens out into various shapes of exquisite flowers. They are of all colors of the rainbow. It is very amusing to watch them take form.

Small size, price 5 cents; large size, 10 cents a package, by mail, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

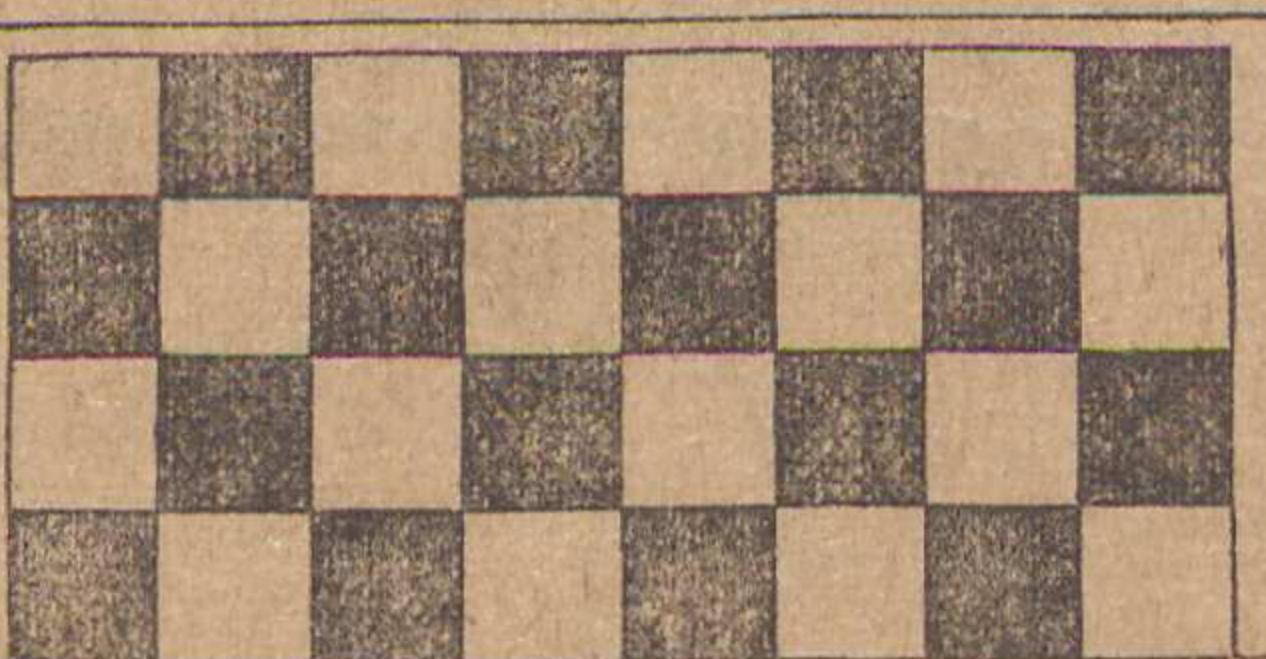


HUMANATONE.

The improved Humanatone. This flute will be found to be the most enjoyable article ever offered; nickel plated, finely polished; each put up in a box with full instruction how to use them. Price, 18c., postpaid.

NOVELTY CO.,
29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

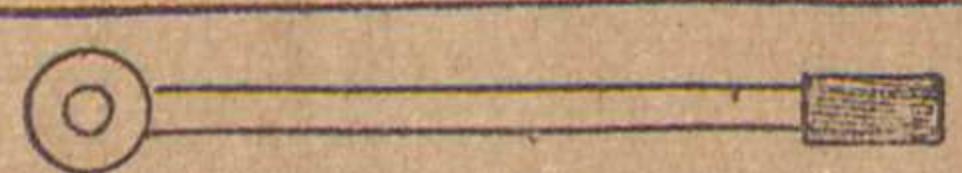
LITTLE CHECKER BOARDS.



Price 7 cents each by mail. They are made of durable colored cardboard, fold to the size of $6\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and are so handy in size that they can be carried in the pocket. They contain 24 red and black checkers, and are just as serviceable as the most expensive boards made. The box and lid can be fastened together in a moment by means of patent joints in the ends. Full directions printed on each box.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

DOUBLE CLAPPERS



They are handsomely made of white wood, 6 inches long, with carefully rounded edges. On each side a steel spring is secured, with flat leaden discs at the ends. They produce a tremendous clatter, and yet they can be played even better than the most expensive bones used by minstrels. The finest article of its kind on the market. Price 7 cents a pair, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

THE FLUTTER-BY.

This mechanical flying machine is worked by a new principle. It looks like a beautiful butterfly, about 9 inches wide. In action its wing movements are exactly like those of a live butterfly. It will travel through the air about 25 feet, in the most natural manner. As flying toys are all the rage, this one should be a source of profit and amusement to both old and young. Price, 18c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

LIGHTNING TRICK BOX.

A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the neatest and best cheap trick ever invented.

Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

FIFFI.



Also known as a Japanese butterfly. A pleasing novelty enclosed in an envelope. When the envelope is opened Fifi will fly out through the air for several yards. Made of colored paper to represent a butterfly six inches wide.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

VANISHING CIGAR.

This cigar is made in exact imitation of a good one. It is held by a rubber cord which, with the attached safety pin, is fastened on the inside of the sleeve. When offered to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

JAPANESE TWIRLER.

A wonderful imported paper novelty. By a simple manipulation of the wooden handles a number of beautiful figures can be produced. It takes on several combinations of magnificent colors.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO.,
29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

SPRING TOPS

Something new for the boys. A top you can spin without a string. This is a decided novelty. It is of large size, made of brass, and has a heavy balance rim. The shank contains a powerful spring and has an outer casing. The top of the shank has a milled edge for winding it up. When wound, you merely lift the outer casing, and the top spins at such a rapid speed that the balance rim keeps it going a long time. Without doubt the handsomest and best top on the market.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

LITTLE ACCORDEONS

The smallest, cheapest, and best sounding musical instrument for the price. This perfect little accordeon has four keys and eight notes, a complete scale, upon which you can play almost any tune. It is about 5 x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in size, and is not a toy, but a practical and serviceable accordeon in every respect; with ordinary care it will last for years, and produces sweet music and perfect harmony. Anyone can learn to play it with very little practice.

Price 12 cents each, by mail, post-paid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE FLUTOPHONE.

A new musical instrument, producing the sweetest dulcet tones of the flute. The upper part of the instrument is placed in the mouth, the lips covering the openings in the centre. Then by blowing gently upon it you can play any tune desired as easily as whistling. But little practice is required to become a finished player. It is made entirely of metal, and will last a lifetime. We will send full instructions with each instrument.

Price 8 cents, by mail, postpaid.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., B'klyn, N. Y.

RUBBER TACKS.

They come six in a box. A wonderful imitation of the real tack. Made of rubber. The box in which they come is the ordinary tack box. This is a great parlor entertainer and you can play a lot of tricks with the tacks. Place them in the palm of your hand, point upward. Then slap the other hand over the tacks and it will seem as if you are committing suicide. Or you can show the tacks and then put them in your mouth and chew them, making believe you have swallowed them. Your friends will think you are a magician. Then, again, you can exhibit the tacks and then quickly push one in your cheek or somebody else's cheek and they will shriek with fear. Absolutely harmless and a very practical and funny joke.

Price by mail, 10c. a box of 6 tacks; 3 for 25c.

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 879 A Golden Treasure; or, The Mystery of An Old Trunk.
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 884 Check 765; or, The Strangest Tip in Wall Street.
 885 A Short Cut to Fortune; and The Smart Boy Who Found It.
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